EVENINGS ON THE THAMES;

OR,

Serene Hours,

AND WHAT THEY REQUIRE.

BY

KENELM HENRY DIGBY.

——— οὐ μέν τι κασιγνήτοιο χερείων
Γίνεται ὅς κεν, ἑταῖρος ἐὼν, πεπνυμένα εἰδῇ.
Od. θ. 585.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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TO THE READER.

THIS Edition was prepared for the press under circumstances that may be communicated perhaps without transgressing the limits allowed to works of the class to which the book belongs, 'litterarum humaniorum,' which, as the term itself indicates, are not rigorously closed against the introduction of what is only of personal interest, if it can be traced to the feelings of our common nature. It was during an interval of hope that the additions were collected and arranged, while there remained to him who made them, living at that time on hope, one who was loved with a deep secret admiration, that notwithstanding her tender years and the sensitive gentleness of a disposition intensely human, partook necessarily in every one of a religious character. It was one whose sufferings in a long illness had only given occasion for the exercise of her indomitable and sprightly courage, whose gay, tender, and affectionate nature seemed only to enhance the gravity and high-minded disdain with which she met the last shadow of evil, when unexpectedly it crossed her path. Seeking latterly silence and retirement,

with as much care as others of her age desire noise and movement, her present life itself was a problem, a mystery; for she had but just escaped, in a way that startled physicians, from death's immediate stroke, and they hinted that now on her complete ultimate recovery from consumption they could almost securely reckon.

Rendered possible by means of that fond hope, the work, such as it is, was pursued in the open air, in the garden of a villa hired for the fine season, upon rocks at the skirts of a pine-grove, within hearing of her on whom the thoughts of many were dwelling, as she used to sit among the flowers lower down, on the sloping parterre, where she read or worked at her embroidery. The hours that were made inestimable by that youthful presence, ever encompassed with an air of bright and holy innocence, like a mystic crown of light which seemed to impart to Time itself, even in relation to others with her, a tone of true happiness and almost of heaven, have, now that they are gone, acquired such a value in the estimation of those who look back on them, that it is a natural wish to prevent from perishing the results of the least task that happened to be in any way wound up with them. It is only, of course, a fancy like another; but these pages are now associated with a memory of those better days when, in a pale girl, realizing the Shakspearian type of truest virtue, he who has penned them felt the power of a mind superior to his own; of a mind ever verifying the reality of the invisible world, and dedicate to nothing temporal. They remind him of the wild, exuberant joy occasioned by what he and others

thought was an escape, though it proved to be only, according to their views, a respite; they constituted his employment amidst the felicity so short to him of a season which was to prove for her a last summer. That is why they are now printed after an overthrow of hopes, otherwise calculated to ensure their suppression and his silence for ever.

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ERRATA.

Page 1, line 10, *for* last *read* least
— 28, — 5, *for* abase *read* abuse
— 45, — 13, *for* insubordination *read* in subordination
— 266, — 5, *for* better *read* more
— 413, — 32, *for* was *read* were
— 533, — 6, *for* Clark *read* Clack

EVENINGS ON THE THAMES,

&c.

CHAPTER I.

LITTLE change—a going out for the day—an afternoon on the river—a few serene hours—of the general meaning of which term we may have a tolerably distinct idea, though when asked for a formal definition one may be rather at a loss for words at the moment, and feel in the dilemma that Thraso found himself, saying only, "Just as though—you understand?"—how the eyes of most people sparkle when such things, even without excepting the last, are proposed in a common way that they can comprehend, and in a form appropriate to their respective sympathies! Serene hours, or, as the poet says, "otium"—rather an unlucky word perhaps to stumble on at first setting out, lest it should bring the whole busy world about our ears, so let us render it a holiday—every one, not excepting, he adds, even the furious Thracian, invokes. Those whose whole life seems to exclude such wants either by reason of their social position which makes every day a day of leisure, or of their gravity which pretends to ignore the need of a moment's respite from ordinary toil, enjoy in point of fact no exemption from this want, and for the reason, as the same poet suggests, that neither riches nor honours, which your grave

people often like very much, can remove cares, troubles, and disquietude,

> "——— miseros tumultus
> Mentis et curas laqueata circum
> Tecta volantes."

Well then, new friend of mine, for whom, as being dear and gentle, I can answer already, which is more than Cowley would undertake to do for his reader—but then he lived in dismal times—this observation being borne out by facts experimentally established, and all life, whether of youth or age, being known to desire such intervals, though it will not be another Daphnis whom you are about to hear that did modulate pastoral hymns with beautiful pipe—though I am not exactly going to tell you more adventures than are contained in a book of chivalry, as Preciosa promised the girl who gave her silver thimble to her for telling her fortune,—albeit our sort of serene hours are not always wholly exclusive of certain achievements, perils, and mishaps, moving accidents by flood and field, hair-breadth escapes, that we might make much of, as being a very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry, however some of them if viewed in juxtaposition with the title given to the interval might seem more ludicrous than strictly speaking heroic,—though no express report is made of these,—we can promise you, I think, some mental pastime that may even contribute to enable you to make your fortune in a very true sense of the word; for—

> "What yields a happy hour,
> What makes joy to last,
> What's fragrant as a flower,
> What's pleasant when 'tis past,"

I undertake, not indeed to sing like one of those old poets, but to suggest, or rather in fact learn with you in an odd homely way that may suit some who happen to be for any thing that turns up to them, though it were written, as Pliny says of some of his trifles, with the same unstudied manner that one usually chats upon the road in taking a summer's day ramble,—

half song, half prose,—it matters not, so that there is any thing in it that can do them good.

> "I'll rattle on exactly as I'd talk,
> With any body in a ride or walk,"

—keeping not too long in one tune, but as Moth advises, "a snip and away." If you, supposing you embarked with me, accustomed to the ways described by Theocritus and the rest of them, should in the sequel deem it not even like a sweet trifle on the double flute, and be not too delicate to show a naked arm about to be stretched down under water, you will have a resource at hand to gratify at once your spleen and your classical habits of thought. Let my prize be only a river mussel-shell encased in mud of the Thames.

The ancients when inclined to write, and commence any literary work, had an advantage over the moderns of which some poor madcaps in that line among the latter have been taught by experience to regret the absence, even while studying to redeem some of their contemporaries in a good-humoured merry way from the infection of such books as martyr sense worse than an old almanack. Those ancients could write so as to be understood and enjoyed by every one who happened to take up their books. They had no hard affected pedantic phraseology, no forced epigrammatic way of expressing common things; and besides they had not through dint of studying clearness like the moderns to become laboriously obscure, as in the instance of those who try to apply a geometric method to subjects that do not admit of it; their works rolling on paralogisms, which generate darkness for the reader; or, as can be witnessed in some who adopt the syllogistic style, proceeding only from principles to consequences by complicated reasoning, leading on through labyrinths where perhaps they are the first to lose themselves; or like others who write by detached thoughts, presenting their subjects in fragments, or after the manner of many, affecting what they call neatness, who are methodic to excess, from the beginning exposing the whole order of their matter, with its divisions and subdivisions. The ancients had no taste for this kind of clearness, which seems to be thought the correct thing

at present*. Moreover they had not from the first page, as at every subsequent turn, to apologize gravely, to deprecate earnestly, to explain philosophically, and to use throughout ingeniously artifices of language with infinite reserves, lest each mode adopted for expressing their thoughts should be set down as an offence against the rules of literature, and each common word mistaken for an impertinence or a vulgarity. Consequently Joubert used to say, as Sainte-Beuve tells us in his Monday conversations, that "it seemed to him much more difficult to be a modern than to be one of the ancients." At all events without the least fear of being parodied and laughed at, they could begin by recording with great simplicity how some fine day they sat down under a platanus to discourse upon oratory or philosophy; they could praise what they termed their suburban gymnasium, or, so little were they influenced by a fear of derogation, they could compare the exquisite pleasure of hearing Cæsar talk, which was for the most refined minds, to the refreshment after a long sultry ramble of resting in a wayside inn, "in aliquo peropportuno diversorio†," which was as bad as if we were to say, "in a tea-garden." The ancients too used to begin their books very often with things that had no great connexion, as some would now say, with their subject, and that without being blamed for it or ridiculed. Cicero was accustomed even to have a volume of prefaces always ready, so that having by mistake prefixed to his book De Gloria the same preamble which he had already used before the third of the Academics, he begs Atticus pleasantly enough to cut it out of the former, and paste it before another treatise that he sends him. In these prefaces they often relate in an off-hand way their occupations in town and country; and then, as Balzac remarks, instead of descending gently and as it were by steps to their subject, you would say that they precipitate themselves on it, so abruptly do they commence. All the exordiums of Sallust are of this kind, and would be as proper for Cicero's books as for his own. After declaiming about vice and virtue, he does

* M. de la Nauze de l'Abus qu'on fait d'une prétendue Clarté de Style. Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscr. xx.

† De Oratore.

not leave his reasoning by a gate, but he escapes by a breach, and so beginning with "to come to the matter we are to treat." Yet no contemporary appears to have thought the worse of his writings on that account. Then, again, the Greeks in this respect appear to have been still more free from the dread of literary scarecrows. Dion Chrysostom begins his subject generally at the end of his discourse. There was a fine field for our critics to run him down on. And if you were to take from Plato his prefatory little narratives and his picturesque digressions, you would strip him of half. The early Christian authors evince the same fearlessness. The dialogue of Minutius Felix in justification of our religion is quite what some would now call frivolous or light reading; and St. Cyprian begins his celebrated letter to Donatus on the vices of the age by a purely poetical description, and a discourse as full of flowers as if, to use the words of an ancient critic, he were only going to speak of love matters. "As for me," continues Balzac, "I wished partly to imitate these noble examples; and so I have made a preface in which I speak as pleasantly as I can of the recreations of autumn, that being the season in which I composed 'le Prince.' I have described the locality and the amusements of my solitude; and after all it will be seen that these things are by no means out of place, but that they further the general object of my book."

Passing in Piccadilly lately, about two o'clock in the afternoon, I saw some friends of mine seated on a public carriage, which was leaving town for Kew Bridge. This is beginning boldly enough, you see, after the free and easy fashion of the ancients, to whose style, from the very fact of its being natural, some of us, after all, are more used than to that savouring of skill and artifice which the modern masters just alluded to would require. Though it is not my duty to explain distinctly the exact social position of the parties thus made use of to introduce the subject of this important work, nothing must be sneeringly inferred, let me observe, as a literary precaution, ere I proceed further, to the disparagement of the dignity, whatever it might be, of the pair thus presented to our notice from the circumstance I have let out of its being a public carriage on the top of which they were seen perched; for not to remark that persons of the highest

line and most honorific qualifications, if well bred, have always the air of arriving in the most unostentatious way, even as a French author says, on foot, as an attention paid to those who may have neither horses nor carriage of their own,—the fact is that many whom you might suppose to be of the race of Agamemnon, in a general way only to be looked at from afar, have had at times in this respect the taste of the Czar Peter the First, who had such a fondness for seeing things at his ease, while being himself unobserved, and such a habit of liberty and independence when going forth to enjoy himself, that when visiting the court of France he used to prefer to all the pomp of royal equipages that were at his disposal any kind of carriage he could hire, though it were, as Goldsmith would say, "his own hackney coach." The first common vehicle, in fact, that he could jump into was the thing for him when bound on an excursion, which manners did not prevent him from being regarded by the polite French as a monarch worthy of admiration, and all Paris from being charmed with his character. So far, therefore, there is nothing at the outset that ought to alarm the most nervous person, fearful of derogation, who reads this introductory narrative; and as for the familiar names of Piccadilly and Kew, they are fitter for my purpose than if I had placed my scene in the Lyceum or the Academy, and might come to sound some future day, though it won't be by means of these three fingers, I am aware of that, quite as dignified and poetical to Christian ears for all their familiarity, and be that without reference to olives of Provence or Sicilian honey which in a certain way, thanks to Fortnum and Mason, might be associated with them, as if I had talked of the suburb of Triana at Seville, or of the Espolon promenade on the banks of the Arbanzon at Valladolid, or of the gate of Xeres on the day of San Sebastian during the fête in the plains of Tablada.

Well, though these loving friends had not yet started, as I had no reason to think that they wanted an addition to their company for that time, I forbore to ask questions after the inquisitive way of Lycidas, demanding forsooth, "Quo te, Mœri, pedes? An, quo via ducit, in urbem?" It was clear enough to any one without having "a topographical bent of genius," that the horses were about to convey them out of town to some of

those places where boats can be hired to carry all kinds of persons, and from which, if they preferred walking, they could begin to roam through the groves and meadows, and by the river stream of waters—for as the swallows were come, a fact not as yet known to the most sedate class of the population, and since that for a spring trick of youth now was the season, I knew very well what was their general object in proceeding thus on a kind of triumphant chariot, as it must have seemed in their eyes, Westward ho! It was to be set down where they could best enjoy, at least by anticipation, what an old poet styles

"These suburb pleasures of a London May."

Though, of course, as old ballads say,

"The tongue may tell what th' eye discovers,
Joys unseene are never sung,"

it was to pass some three or four hours very quietly and very pleasantly, with the place all to themselves, either in those renowned royal gardens, or passing beyond Richmond as a little too much like town, where every thing you do is "lippis et tonsoribus notum," a kind of general rendezvous, too public and destitute of nooks and corners—to steer for Twickenham, Teddington, Hampton Court, or some other distant haven,

"Scenes that each spring our fancy would renew,
Scenes that our fathers were well pleased to view,"

spots, banks, corners, where can always be practised in one way or other the uncommonly wise precept of the Stoic, "Absconde te in otio, sed et otium tuum absconde*." It was not the first time that my friend, as I call him, not to be making one long capital letter,—a fellow, "urbis amator" like Fuscus, "ruris amator" like Flaccus, might have been caught making an expedition thus, to enjoy a serene hour in some spot selected after the fashion of our German ancestors,—"ut fons, ut campus, ut nemus placuit." Being generally, as the Spaniards say, of a disposition or humour andantesque, thinking that it is never

* Seneca, Epist. 68.

well with a man excepting in the spot where he is not, and moreover, of old, knowing well the Thames as far as Eton Bridge, though accustomed to speak of it between Kew and Hampton Court as being more "especially our own waters," he used often, with some one or two he liked—

> "When breezes were soft and skies were fair,
> To steal an hour from study and care,
> And hie him away to the woodland scene,
> Where wanders the stream through slopes of green."

They would row up the stream as far as their time permitted, making a reserve for sufficient intervals to be spent either in swimming, if circumstances allowed it, and that would be thrice perhaps in the one day, requiring little more time for toilet than young ducks, or what could be always effected, basking on the grass, or strolling along those pleasant roads near the river, chatting and singing, and philosophizing in a way of their own, and that way mainly perhaps consists in feeling, which is a method not to be disdained by your grave people on that account; for, as the poor young poet David Gray says, "In all the stories of mental warfare that I have ever read, the mind which became of celestial clearness and godlike power, did nothing for twenty years but feel." There now—I hope he has shut them up.

> "Then in the tranquil evenings of summer, when brightly the sunset
> Lighted the village street and gilded the vanes on the chimneys,"

returning to the boat and sculling along the banks of Sion House gathering forget-me-nots in handfuls, as they would glide by, till once more ashore and seated as I saw them starting on the friendly and long-backed car, as you may call it, they could arm themselves with those enormous bouquets, the size of an antique fan, provided at the bridge as if expressly to enable every one to crown the day and carry home a token which for a whole week at least they may point at on their mantel-shelf as a kind of memorial of the great event.

> "So went they playing on the watery plain."

O what hours are these! Well might a celebrated author ex-

claim, "O wayside inns and pedestrian rambles! O summer evenings under honeysuckle arbours on the banks of blue waves! O youth, youth*!"

So now you have the story such as it is, for the proemial part, that precludes, as a very grave author says, "the vain expedients of softening censure by apologies, or rousing attention by abruptness," and therefore I pray you to be content and good-humoured, and take it in a kind, friendly way without cavilling more than you can help.

Few, perhaps, if you actually set yourself to reckon them, for otherwise each is encircled with such light that they seem numberless, few, and often separated by long intervals, are the purely serene hours or moments which in a common way any of us enjoy in this life. Let our supposed facilities be ever so great, it won't, I suspect, tax our arithmetical powers overmuch to calculate the proportion in which they exist to others.

"Wepyng and wailyng, care and other sorwe
We knowe y-nough, bothe on even and on morwe."

Balzac, who had a cool head, not to be imposed upon by vague brightness in the memory, in a work written shortly before his death, says, that if all days of grief and disquietude were taken from his frail existence, he would find that since he had been in the world he had not lived one whole year. There may be still some men, perhaps, aye, and women too, for that matter, God help them! who could predicate as much of themselves; but some taste, some idea at least, as well as some memory of the kind of thing nearly all persons, and happily too, as Fontenelle remarks, without any exception of class, have had; for, as he says, while the main state of conditions is unequal and different, these instants, spread through the life of each one, are common to all conditions; and in this respect, nature as a common mother performs her duty well†. On occasion of these momentary intervals of pleasure or rest, or call it what you like, which, though vouchsafed to all, are of course somewhat depending as to the form on the condition of those who enjoy

* What will he do with it? † Du Bonheur.

them;—during, I say, what we may call these short pauses in the race of life, a great deal is apt to pass through the mind which can enlighten it, if not the Thames, as some would say. "I shall tell you," says Walton, "what some have observed, and I have found it to be a real truth, that the very sitting by the river's side is not only the quietest and fittest place for contemplation, but will invite us to it." Certainly this is true of your sculler and mere rover, and of his companions for the time, as well as of your angler. One traverses then many paths in the wanderings of thought, Homeric-like,

——————— πολλὰ φρεσὶ μερμηρίζων,—

Imagination, as Ben Jonson says, flies swifter than a pair of oars; and therefore,

"Besides ten thousand freaks that die in thinking,"

some deep and delicate things that ought to last are suggested; ideas which well would occupy a summer's day come with walking or rowing, or lying stretched upon the bank; some impressions are made on the heart too, which are of more importance still, all of which I can't help thinking it might be well to study, and, if possible, perpetuate.

"Mon sujet est petit, cet accessoire est grand."

Without reference indeed to results of this kind, a mere account of a day in the fields or on the river would, of course, be a mere nothing. Then, as we have already observed, there is a desire in nearly all the world to be allowed such intervals. It might be well, therefore, I conceive, to consider how best they can be obtained and secured. Such is the twofold object of the following pages, which will of necessity comprise so wide a range of subjects that I may apply to them the poet's well-known lines, and in a good sense say—

"Quidquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,
Gaudia, discursus, nostri est farrago libelli."

Some persons, judging from the title, perhaps, will expect

to find only light frivolous things here chronicled. What a cheat is this! they will exclaim. Pretty sort of book, indeed, professing to treat of evenings on the Thames, of holidays and excursions! Methinks I hear them say all this and a great deal more besides, when they find that there is in it no continuous narrative as in a novel, no variety of characters as in a dramatic composition, and no dialogue as in a work of philosophy. "I wish heartily," as a great French author says, "that they would not amuse themselves with me or my book, en façon quelconque." Of course, it is not in any form the true book of the Thames. That, at least as far as description and engraving goes, can be had elsewhere; nor is it precisely a book of adventures, though I admit there might be plenty in it of both high and laughable ones. That sort of work too can be found every where. But here must be omitted many things of worthy memory which now shall die in oblivion, and thou return, as Gremio says, "unexperienced to thy grave." The name therefore may deceive you, as Jules Janin says of a certain village in France. But though it is not the exact place where the kind of wine that it sets you thinking about is grown, there is a small light kind of vinous beverage to be had here, and which perhaps you will find not unpalatable, at least on a hot day in summer. There are little narratives, too, interspersed that may pass for something better in that line. You might work some of them into a story for us, neighbour artist, over our chimney. You will find them before and after each excursion, telling you somewhat about the starting and the return home; involving no great adventures, I must own, but for all that agreeable to those who court the serene; and, in fact, we have only any day to be out for a little while, to meet with realities that have all the delicacy and airy sprightliness of a dream, for which they may be mistaken when recalled to memory. The whole is but a mad trick of youth, as they say, for the spring, or a short progress; and mirth may be made out of it, if we knew how to carry it. But still, as I said, it is not the book of the Thames, nor yet a tale of very heroic exploits: you who want long descriptions, and to know all that happened during the interim in the exterior world, must dream the rest. Nevertheless, there will be a certain flavour perhaps in the light

potation, a certain advantage to be found in what forms the element of the reflections and conversation which shall be recorded, that will prove agreeable in the fine season, and even after it is over, when you sit by your fireside; in fact, allow me in the pride of authorship to declare my conviction, still constant, though the fact stares me in the face that I am advised to get rid of more than half of the first edition, the editio princeps, by letting it be sold as waste paper, that if the idea which suggested the book were properly carried out as it might be, if entrusted to another, for I have not so forgotten myself as to leave out that clause, the result would resemble what a celebrated scholar and statesman terms "the Diapason of Homer, embracing with its sweep things small and things great, things sublime and things homely, all objects that experience has suggested, and all thoughts that the soul of man has imagined or received." As it is, I admit that it might be more in accordance with the ideal that gave it existence; but every one should see to his own measure, and all I can do is to suggest the task to others,—"Metiri se quemque suo modulo ac pede, verum est;" or, as another in old time said, "we cannot all of us do all things,"—

"Non omnia possumus omnes."

It is not for every one to class himself among those men of mighty genius who determine the character of their epoch—who give a push of their elbow to humanity and make it change its course; it is not for each of us even to know and explain all mysteries, as if he were the president of a section at a gathering of philosophers, inquiring whether we are of the gorilla race, or whether we have been on earth 180,000 years, nine days, and five hours, or still longer, and consequently, possessing such talent, to prefix to his book a due notice, such as the next century may be accustomed to hear, that the right of translating it into the language of Jupiter and Saturn, and the rest of them, "is reserved." Perhaps, judging only from their own titles and promises, the undertakings of many even great men are too disproportioned to their strength. Certainly, as Janin suggests, a treatise on the art of avoiding the sublime might be sometimes useful to the grave world; and it is not always so well to re-

semble Garat, of whom a critic says, "he was the man of prospectuses and of promises." But to go out as it were with some sweet friend on the river or through the fields, and enjoy a spring morning or evening, or the first day of summer, or the last fine sunsets of autumn, and to try to turn to some intellectual and other account the impressions that one receives during the interval, is an achievement that requires no transcendent ability. As the clown in an old play says, "to do this is within the compass of man's wit; and therefore I will attempt the doing it." However, be assured that I shall keep a steady aim at solid things all through; as the dog Berganza says to the other dog, his comrade, "Don't be angry if I philosophize a little, for if I fail to utter what I think of when the things come into my mind, it seems to me that my diary will be incomplete and of no utility;" for as one of the ancients said, philosophy is necessary, even when we do not treat on philosophy—"Philosophandum est, etiamsi non est philosophandum," —words, my most sapient reader, handed down by Asconius Pedianus in his notes on the Divination of Cicero. Some awkward customers, of course, will deem out of time and place the introduction of Greek and Latin sentences and grave subjects during a day's excursion: it will be very easy to ridicule all this in a sharp witty way; I can fancy the article already written; perhaps I could write it myself; but though we have no

> "———————— Sompnour with us,
> Who when that he well dronken had some wine,
> Then wold he speake no word but Latin,"

a little jollity is apt to make people demonstrative; and who knows but even the women rather like a fellow that loves to show off at times in a merry way; and after all, though we may not have access to the garden of Scipio, why not avail oneself every where of the most beautiful productions of human genius? In moments of joy as well as of discouragement, many are apt to repair to the ancient poets as to a sort of common friend whose smile is always ready to receive them. The pedantic critics who cry out Pedantry only make manifest their own inexperience with regard to excursions of the kind we propose to

make, which, in point of fact, while showing people much given to talking, laughing, and noise, will be generally found to turn out very Homeric things, just as if all composing them had heard the very words—Feast now sitting in the booth, and amuse yourselves with conversation, *καὶ μύθοις τέρπεσθε.*

"Monsieur, avec du Grec on ne peut gâter rien."

Take Molière's word for it. And as for the rest, "it is needful a gentleman should speak Latin sometimes." Therefore will I make use of that little I have, upon times and occasions.

You have books enough already, I know, on all subjects that either directly or indirectly tend to yield instruction. As Richard of St. Victor said to some in his day, though it may seem impudent enough in me to use the words of such a man, for "I am none such, I mot speak as I can;" "if I say nothing but what is found in your codexes, it will be judged superfluous; if any thing else, perhaps it will be derided, and laughed down." Of course, I know myself too mean for your grave philosopher's high thoughts to stoop at; being intent on nothing more than asking a light question to make him merry, if that can be done, or to pass his time. However, I intend to be like Proteus again, and on this occasion become at one time all water, and at another a lofty tree; so that Father Thames himself might recognize in me a relative of his own. Have me excused if at times I speak amiss; the will is pretty fair, and the subject, after all, chosen according to the best prescribed rules, which require that we should study our disposition, our inclinations, our most intimate thoughts, the most secret voices of our heart, and even our instincts, in order to learn what is a likely field for us on which to verify the maxim, "nos unusquisque in arte sua sapiens est." There's no need of being reserved or formal on setting out, so let me speak gaily on a personal matter. I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have taken up a pen to resume the same old study often presented only with variations, as musicians say; and during many hours out of twenty-four, it is no very difficult task to awe a man from the career of his humour. But there are also moments when soaring far above the heads of such intimidators, he will look down on them

contemptuously, or descending to their level, perch close to their side, as if he saw through them clearly enough, and knew that there was nothing of human feeling in any of them, for all their fierce turns; but that each was composed only of a shocking bad hat on a pole, with a wisp of straw tied round it; when consequently he will indulge his taste quite unconcerned, feed on what fancies he pleases, and refresh his dear heart. I am in that mind now; so come what may, "we'll have humours," as Antonio says, and give folks leave to prate.

Here, I admit again, will be quotations on quotations; a trick so often repeated as to sink, as Pliny said of repeated pleading, into a mere mechanical habit. I am done for if Caliban's advice be followed to seize my books, for, as the monster said of his master, "without them I'm but a sot, nor have I one spirit to command." Indeed I am afraid that every page of this elaborate work may be an occasion for such men at least as are well up in that part of French literature, which is hitherto untranslated into our tongue, to practise the politeness of Piron, who took off his hat at each passage that he knew was borrowed, when a manuscript was read to him, and said, on being asked why he did so, that he was accustomed to salute all his old acquaintances. But what would you have from me? Does not La Fontaine tell you, if you did not know it before, that "chacun a son défaut, où toujours il revient?" And pray does not the Thames itself set me an example, bearing to the sea many waters that never came from its own spring-head? Once more, be it acknowledged, I do fear when every feather sticks in his own wing, Lord Timon will be left a naked gull. But "what's that to the cure, who is made up of patches, parings, shreds?" The truth is, like another doctor in spite of himself, "Je suis le premier homme du monde pour faire des fagots." Yes, I make fagots; I spare no pains in making them; I make them in such a style, too, that there is nothing left for any one to say about them. Only, of course, let the proprietors of woods look out. Let my Lord Balzac the elder look to his old forests. Let the Duke of Caxton, and my Lord Ste. Beuve, and nearly all our English owners of young plantations, bid their rangers be on the watch; for we are rather awkward neighbours, having an eye ever open to what may serve our turn; and there is hardly even a misera-

ble copse or cover by the roadside in which we do not find, as Sganarolle says, somewhat that relates to our little line of business. It is a simple gift full of things picked up in the memory, shaped in the fancy, and delivered upon the mellowing of occasion—but the gift is good in those in whom it is acute, and they should be thankful for it.

Then again, many I know have made a great book because they had not leisure to make a little one. But here it will be said power was wanting to imitate the splendid economy that belongs to the style of great masters.

"I'm sensible redundancy is wrong."

But then, as the same poet says, after all who now-a-days has the right to abuse me for it? Some talk of this, some talk of that in state of blusteration, "Am I right or any other man?"

"Some speakers whine, and some appeal to reason,
And more or less continue still to tear on,
With arguments according to their 'forte;'
But no one ever dreams of being short."

However, of course, my book in that respect is more tedious than any other. It could all be contained in fewer words; for these critics would reduce literature to x—y. Nor is this all my demerit; and there is no danger of any part of it being overlooked in us. It will be remarked that we do not begin, as I have already acknowledged, by a detailed analysis of the matter on which we are about to treat. Consequently we are not sufficiently clear or intelligible. We seem to conceal the thread of our discourse instead of making a parade of it; and, in short, our method is so disguised by the form, that the reader cannot make out from the first instant whither we are prepared to lead him. To be sure this was the old classical way, but no one cares for that now. In fine, some Holofernes or another will engage to prove, also, the whole to be very unlearned, neither savouring of poetry, wit, or invention; in brief, a thing not to be received within the thought of a scholar. "No one, of course," he will say, "would ever think of going to you for views of history, or common sense, or, above all, for logic; since your major is always inapt, your minor impertinent, and your conclusion

ridiculous." Have you not heard all this said already? I should think I have. There's a book that is in no great request, I can tell you. They made fine game of it. Were one to heed all they say, I warrant they would whip me with their fine wits till I were as crest-fallen as a dried pear. "'Tis no matter," as Sir Oliver says, "ne'er a fantastical knave of them all shall flout me out of my calling." Were one serious, however, as if feeling personally affronted, it might be well to refer them all in a wholesale way to the remarks of a real critic, who says of his brethren in that walk, "that notwithstanding all their fine and brilliant developments, they find the means, unlike our English Johnson, of having neither the armed solidity of the dart which strikes, nor the authority which causes certain judgments to endure."

"In writing to you, dearest brother," says Richard of St. Victor, "I am more compelled by leisure than by any definite object in view; encouraged more by your fraternal love than by any sense of my own literary merits. But since I fancy that my words, whatever they may be, please you, I would rather write than be silent*." That expression, "compelled by leisure," and that allusion to the kindness and condescension of others, would peculiarly suit the author of the following pages, were he merely inclined to scribble on, and give utterance to whatever thoughts came uppermost, as so many of late have done, composing, not alone letters, but books apparently without any very definite object beyond the mere art of composition; of which no doubt they show themselves again to be consummate masters. It has been said, justly enough however (I am grown serious and grave all of a sudden), that we can hardly form too great an estimate of the evils and dangers of a literature which ceases to be the instrument of a fruitful idea, isolating itself from the causes which it ought to defend, to become an art independent of all that it ought to express and serve—a particular power, *sui generis*, seeking only in itself its life, its object, and its glory; an art which is cultivated without any ardent passion, any vigorous conviction, but simply for itself, with premeditation, living by its own force, asking no aid from the subject on which

* Epist.

it is occupied, and no other object but to fill the pockets of its worshippers, by furnishing the strongest excitements, which very possibly are found to consist in personalities and the scandals of private life*. But one may affirm, without any great partiality, that the book before us will at least possess the negative merit of not indicating any traces of the spirit of this kind of literature. Other productions by the same scribbler or fagot-maker have been most kindly praised by the generous unknown who judged too favourably of them;

"—— sed non ego credulus illis;
Nam neque adhuc Varo videor nec dicere Cinna
Digna, sed argutos inter strepere anser olores."

Still in the present pages, with all their follies and literary defects into the bargain, which he wants no one to point out to him, being already sufficiently impressed with a sense of their magnitude, there is an idea, an object, to which the whole is made subordinate; and on the ground of that distinguished merit he hopes for indulgence. To amuse, as others apply themselves, is no doubt to render a service of some sort; but still, whoever takes up a pen, even when bent on frolic, should be able to say with Cicero, "Omnis cura mea solet in hoc versari semper—dicam enim sæpius—si possim, ut boni efficiam aliquid scribendo; sin id minus, ut certe ne quid mali." The subject does not appear incompatible with this kind of ambition, which seems innocent enough as times go. M. Joubert, a very grave judge of such matters, would render instruction agreeable, while acting the part and reaping the advantages of a Virgilian pastor, who could say—

"Non insueta graves tentabunt pabula fœtas,
Nec mala vicini pecoris contagia lædent."

"One ought to know also," he continues, "that in spite of the spirit of this age, there is nothing so docile, and so easily led back to good and to the ancient pastures as these flocks of youth." Another accomplished critic of the highest branch of letters speaks in the same sense, saying, "A book ought to interest and even, allow me to use the word, amuse us; for it is

* Armand de Pontmartin, 1858. Le Correspond., tom. vii.

a just saying, that where there is nothing agreeable there is, in the true sense of the term, no literature*." At all events, what is generally recognized and felt to be well when enjoyed, can hardly be ill when taught. If, as in play, we teach each other any thing, reading and thinking together, and hearing what magnanimous and subtle authors have said on subjects that come home to all of us, why should any one be inflamed with great indignation? As for literary faults, such as the abundance of citations, to which some may owe these cries in their ears of—

> "Va, va, restituer tous les honteux larcins,
> Que réclament sur toi les Grecs et les Latins,"

one may feel less uneasy, as the amount of damage in that case would be no great thing after all to any one. Once afloat thus, I admit that I find means often to cast my net over names and sentences which are not directly and immediately in the course in which I am directing the boat, and that I manage to haul in consequently a rather miscellaneous draught, which would offend your more regular and expert proficients in such piscatorial proceedings in the literary way. No doubt we have somewhat of Prince Henry's "damnable iteration." No doubt that flood of extracts ought, like our Thames after much rain, to be kept within banks, and not suffered to overflow with a certain juvenile impunity. No doubt, as Jacomo says—for I must be like the sailor that swore at his mate for swearing—"he has commonplaces to answer any ordinary question." Past a doubt, if you take from him here what he has hauled in from the great stores of Richard of St. Victor, for instance, and the old Balzac, to name no others, of which the bare names would sink a coal-barge, you take away the best part of his cargo. But suppose that the book had been entitled studies on those great and rare authors—granting that it was by one who was likely to handle them in a rude and novel way—would you deem his undertaking wholly insipid? Why pick a literary quarrel with him for seeking to connect these passages by a string of his own fabrication, and to make use of them to learn the secret of enjoying serene hours? This is not claiming for oneself another's

* Sainte-Beuve.

muse. And, besides, perhaps after all some people are a little too apt to blame an author for quotations. Not to remark how difficult it is to resist the temptation to make them when inflamed with a certain boundless admiration for what one reads, that makes one reckless of all consequences; not to suggest that beauties of thought may be transferred from one language to another; though, of course, that of form, "apicibus verborum ligata," are chained, as Sainte-Beuve says, to the brilliant crests of the words, and therefore that there may be found good in labours and plodding industry, though without genius; not to remark that there are authors who seem to breathe serenity, from whom, in consequence, the fact of translating or transferring a page or two into such a work as the present, must be regarded as very excusable if not meritorious,—not, I say, to suggest all this, it seems to me as if there were some advantages belonging to this practice that are not to be disdained; for if it be true, as Cicero says, that you should beware of adopting a style of which the imitation would be ridiculous*, by following this course you seem to comply with his suggestion. There is certainly no want of very original authors, full of idiosyncrasies, somewhat a hard word for us by the way, but it means odd whims of one's own—and men disdaining aid from any source, and singular authors who can boast, like Epicurus, that in all their writings they have not cited one single authority out of any book whatsoever, becoming thus genuine thinkers, as critics now-a-days say, which they can learn to be without a master. But some have yet to be convinced that others can aspire like them to great originality of thoughts and style, without being deemed to look silly for their pains. There are others whom one admires, but whom one could neither imitate if one wished, nor would if one could. It seems to some, on the other hand, probable, that an imitation of such miscellaneous patchwork as is presented in books of this description, does not so easily lend itself for the purpose of ridicule, though, of course, any one can in a moment undo it; "facilius est enim apta dissolvere," as Cicero says, "quam dissipata connectere." At all events, the fault here is purely literary; for if in this instance the extracts

* Brutus, 62.

are sometimes from writers who in other places are dangerous to youth, and as for what is objectionable in that line, Moth says with truth, the world has been very guilty of such a ballad, some three ages ago, though the spider and the bee ofttimes suck from one flower, still you will sooner find the sources of the Nile, which may be above the lake we hear about for aught we know, than the titles of the books from which they have been drawn; and that, at least, I suppose is well, even in a social point of view, since, as an emperor once said, what is hurtful to the bee is hurtful to the hive. Nevertheless, in accordance with a rule of just criticism *, I have always thought it well in the interest of what I believe, aye, and know, to be true and good, to cite the words in its favour of men who seemed to take an opposite side in regard to both; for besides that by giving their words such an application we contrive to have them enlisted, as it were, in the army where at least every one is sure to receive pay for the smallest assistance, even, perhaps, though unintentionally offered, the aid of such conscripts would decidedly carry with it far more weight and importance than that of regular volunteers in the service, and veteran adherents who had no choice but to charge, in accordance with the fact noticed by St. Gregory, where he says, "minus mihi Maria Magdalene præstitit, quæ citius credidit, quam Thomas qui diu dubitavit." It is for the same reason that Bolingbroke says he "would quote my Lord Clarendon against Charles I. and Ludlow for him."

> "For what a repining enemy commends,
> That breath fame follows; that praise, sole pure, transcends."

Moreover, there is variety, and unexpected pleasure, in such incidental approximations, and some might naturally suppose that others too, in a moment at least of good humour, would enjoy it. I only wish that one might with truth use the words of a great French critic, and say that "a pleasure which is only for the writer's self moves him little, and lasts but a short time. It is for himself and for his unknown friends that he reads, and reflects, and writes, and meditates, and copies, and considers,

* Des Citations Hist. de l'Acad. des Inscript., tom. iii. p. 113.

and feels. In their absence he thinks of them. Do any lines strike him? They shall hear them. Has he met with a fine passage? They shall have it. Does he enjoy a serene hour? They shall partake of it."

There are, however, two objections to which works of this kind are no doubt obnoxious. They belong intentionally, and not always with a bad motive, to what Dr. Johnson, though perhaps without meaning to disparage them, calls "the lower orders of literature," being meant for the use of simple people, young mechanics, scholar boys, merry girls, and such like, who all can be grave enough at times in their way. Books of this kind, indeed, are not to be confounded with that "basse littérature," as the French call it when speaking of what distinguishes their revolutionary school, for which the first Napoleon, by the way, who liked intemperance of language, and to write in newspapers, may be said to have had a passion; but still, it would be affectation, if not hypocrisy, in these authors, to aim at producing what belongs to the higher ranks of letters. And, indeed, they possess in most cases that humility and absence of ambition which appears so pleasantly in the remark of Jules Janin when saying, "We see in the Louvre the apotheosis of Homer, but Ingres will never, as far as I know, represent the apotheosis of the Feuilleton*." But for all that, writings belonging to this lowly class may have a lofty purpose to accomplish; for, as the French say, "pour viser en haut;" we ought sometimes in this manner "viser en bas;" and then again, what seems no small advantage, this style of composition, to use the phraseology of Burke, "can mitigate authors into companions, and compel wisdom to submit to the soft collar of social esteem." If that fine sentence will not serve our turn, at least you must permit us to choose our company; and then we little creatures, you know, must help one another. So much for the first objection; but the next may be thought graver still; for, secondly, they are written with a wish to please those who are joyous and happy; and there are many circumstances, many moods, many humours, in which such an attempt is safe to be met with frowns, if not with deep aversion

* Les Contes du Chalet.

and disgust. For both reasons, therefore, they may offend even what is noblest; but still it may be alleged in their excuse, that at least they are opposed to two evil passions that are not quite subdued in our generation—namely, pride and sadness.

And after all, as Longfellow says,

> "Nothing useless is, or low;
> Each thing in its place is best;
> And what seems but idle show,
> Strengthens and supports the rest."

The fault of these authors belonging to the familiar regions, if it can be called a fault, is never to have the air of taking any thing seriously, even when they do very serious things, as the tiresome merit of many grave men is never to abandon the sentiment of their own importance, even when they do frivolous light things. It is M. de Pontmartin, a very excellent Christian, who makes this remark*. At all times it is true,

> "Oderunt hilarem tristes, tristemque jocosi;"

but at present the first part of the line seems more generally verified; our laughers are more indulgent to others than the grave. To be sure, recurring to our own book without gravity, as a late poet says, "What we are doing in writing it seems insignificant enough in the midst of this rocking to and fro of nations, and tumbling down of thrones and republics. But, after all, the little sometimes survives the great, as the great can only exist by reason of the little." However, let the times be what they may, though surely they are at moments inviting enough even at present in England, still, men now-a-days will not permit even the thoughtful and pensive to have a holiday. Praise a serene hour! It would not have relished among their other discredits. Nevertheless hear what says Richard of St. Victor: "In the highest state of existence there is always place for laughter; in the lowest, always place for weeping; in the medium state, here on earth, there is a time for laughing and for tears†." Alas! who could have expected that any of

* Causeries littéraires, 151.

† De Statu interioris Hominis, lib. i. 27.

human kind would object to these fleeting moments of sunshine? They had but so short a time to wait to behold them overcast!

"For see how soon these pleasures fade away,
How near to evening is Delight's short day!"

"I am the willinger to justify the pleasant part of my book," says poor Izaak Walton, "because, though it is known I can be serious at seasonable times, yet the whole discourse is, or rather was, a picture of my own dispositions, in such days and times as I have laid aside business, and gone a-fishing with honest Nat. and M. Noe; but they are gone, and with them most of my pleasant hours, even as a shadow that passeth away and returns not." Oh, if some one else could have leave now like him to unburden his heart! Serene hours, where are they?

"——— the woollen feet
Of time do move with little noise."

Yesterday, perhaps, to take but one instance, you were the arch girl, all for mirth and a fine excursion; to-day you are beheld resigned to the thought of soon repairing to the place where is constituted the house of all youth; you are heard only wishing that it may be a fine day, "for the sake of young people;" as if already, while still nothing but a child, you felt that you were no longer one of them yourself.

"Oh! have you seen a lily pale,
When beating rains descend?
So droops the slow-consuming maid,
Her life now near its end!"

Alas! since writing this, how many are there who can say, She is gone! So finishes a holiday in life, says, on one occasion, the author of "What will he do with it?" "Hallow it," he adds, "hallow it. Life's holidays are not too many."

But to return to our subject; for I assure you we have one, though you may not quite see it yet. Some one says that it is a very good office one man does another, when he tells him the manner of his being pleased. At all events, if a grave Jesuit

was permitted formerly to write on the art of always rejoicing, methinks a poor common wight of the nineteenth century may be permitted, without offence, to treat on the art of gaining a few serene hours, especially when it is discovered that this latter art involves also the former. Eh! am I right, or any other man? Perhaps 'tis a happy fancy, if heaven will please to prosper it. We are so moderate in our demands, too! We are not asking leave to go out for ten days together, like the Florentine of immortal fame, nor for seven consecutive days, like the September party that set forth from the baths of Caulderets, and found a queen bold enough to chronicle their conversations. Cervantes proposed writing a book to be entitled "Weeks in the Garden." Others are now inviting us to it "Once a Week." We have neither sought to realize the ideal condition in the mind's eye of French scholars when invoking the week with four Thursdays, nor have we even aspired to behold that week with but three, according to the wise modification adopted by Jules Janin, in his late charming work entitled "La semaine des trois Jeudis." As a general thing the old-fashioned week would more than content us; for like Walton, "when we sit near this primrose bank, and from the river look on these meadows," we think of them as the Emperor Charles did of the city of Florence, "that they were too pleasant to be looked on, but only on rare holidays." But the real truth is, we only ask for an hour or two from time to time, with long weeks of work intervening; a condition which we deem so essential, that we suppose even the book itself, in order to have any chance of success, being taken up only twice a month, allowing but one chapter to be read each time, from March to November.

Then we have such grave authorities to keep us in countenance! For not to speak of the "Here and There" of a celebrated French author, amusing here and there, but the rambles of one whose overstrained, and often unjust gravity, or rather austerity of a new form not a little repulsive, I confess, for my part, I cannot relish, and therefore will not call to my aid, is there not the Abbé Bautain's book, only just come out, entitled "La Belle Saison à la Campagne," speaking of which a commentator says, "Is not this what every one loves, and, at the return of each

spring, what every one desires? The fine season in the country was the desire of the opulent ancients—

'O rus! quando te adspiciam?'"

The fine season in the country! Is it not the ardent dream even of ascetic souls?—the legitimate vow of every one who does not wish to let his mind lose all freshness and perfume in the consuming atmosphere of affairs?

The Père Boutauld, recommending us to go out occasionally in order to take walks through the green alleys of a wood with friends content with each other's company, as constituting a sufficient theatre the one for the other, and even expressly defining his object to be not to induce us to enter on profound meditation, but simply "to engage in conversation on the first subject that occurs to our thoughts," refers us to the highest authority for our encouragement, citing the words "Veni, dilecte mi, egrediamur in agrum, commoremur in villis."

Perhaps it looks like partiality to avow it so rawly, but it seems to me that the idea which suggested the present work falls in rather happily with the wants and views of our times. So that, with a proper consciousness of its defects, we might apply to it what a poet said to his own book:—

"Judicis officium est, ut res, ita tempora rerum
Quærere: quæsito tempore tutus eris."

At all times, indeed, as Cicero says, the object of a writer should be threefold,—to conciliate, to teach, and to move or excite; but at present, when there seems to be so little left to learn, every one being expected to be qualified for the place of head master of an endowed grammar school, a great field for conciliation and for persuasion remains for us, which can only be cultivated by observing what people are most inclined to wish for. Now it is certainly a characteristic of our times for men to desire social with personal liberty and peaceful enjoyment. Every one with or without conscience cries out with Persius, "Libertate opus est," and it is a very general wish also, however unreasonable, to give over tormenting each other further than necessity demands, and to endeavour to obtain for ourselves and our friends at intervals a purely serene hour. It is

admitted also generally by the gravest writers, that works intended in any way to benefit society ought to be rewritten from time to time, in order to keep pace with the change of feeling or of tastes consequent upon new stages of civilization. "In presenting old truths under a new light," said Vincent of Lerins, "you do not invent new doctrines,"—words, by the way, which the Abbé Gerbet, in our time, we are assured, loves to repeat. Well, the ages that formally militated against all pacific joy, the ages of seeking glory, and military conquest, and all that, at least the ages of intolerance and persecution, are now said to be passed away. "Les sabreurs ont fini," we are told; "c'est le tour des penseurs." It is to be hoped it may be so; though, even before these late unparalleled events, there were not wanting, as Coleridge calls them,

"Ancestral voices prophesying war."

Still there is a tendency towards the love of peace great and unquestionable, and, as a French writer says, alluding to something else, "The old knights themselves, if they could come forth out of their tombs, would in this respect at least follow the light of our times. They would have no hesitation in saying that never would they brandish more revengeful steel over the glittering helmet of their foe," adding, with our old dramatist, that "there is more pleasure in tuning of a voice, than in a volley of shot. Down with arms, and up with feet! This is a world for the nonce, sweet youths; if you knew what it were to save your sweet blood, you would not so foolishly go about to spend it. What delight can there be in gashing to make foul scars in fair faces, and crooked maims in straight legs? As though men being born goodly by nature, would of purpose become deformed by folly." This is what Perceforest and Tirante the White, and Amadis and Gyron, and all of them, if you could only once get them afloat, would join us in repeating. You would even see "great Hector in his weeds of peace." And on becoming thus wise, these great warlike lords would find a type of what they desire in the very swans upon the Thames; for, to use the words of Buffon, in his celebrated treatise on that bird, "In all society, whether of animals or of men, violence makes tyrants, and gentle authority kings. The lion and the tiger on the earth, the eagle

and the vulture in the air, reign only by war, dominate only by the abuse of strength and by cruelty; whereas the swan reigns upon the water by all the titles which constitute an empire of peace—grandeur, majesty, and gentleness. With power, strength, courage, and a will never to abase them, but to employ them only in self-defence, he knows how to fight and conquer without attacking others. Peaceful king of all your water birds, he braves the tyrants of the air; he waits for the eagle without provoking him, and without fear; he repels his attacks by opposing his plumes and the quick blows of a vigorous wing, which serves him for a shield; and in most cases victory crowns his efforts. But that fierce creature, with the crooked beak, is his only enemy, for all other warrior-birds respect him, and he is at peace with all nature. He lives as a friend rather than as monarch, in the midst of a numerous tribe of aquatic birds, that seem all to range themselves under his law; he is only the chief and the first inhabitant of a calm republic, of which the citizens have nothing to fear from a master who asks from them nothing but what he grants them, and who only desires peace and freedom." This, I repeat it, is the type that we may believe would now suit, if not the monarch to whom the lesson was addressed, at least the heroes of our old romance, who, while clad in steel, were unselfish, natural, and generous, like the youth around us, that knows of only ships iron-clad, with which most of them have nothing to do. When let alone we have no great desire for spending one of Harry Percy's "sad and bloody hours." We are all now for what is serene, and, unlike our rude German ancestors, for gaining by sweat rather than by blood; in other words, we are for enjoying at times what we propose to consider in this book. Lacordaire is so much influenced by views of this kind, that when seeking to account for God having chosen St. Thomas of Aquin, the great doctor, from the blood of the Tancreds and Hohenstaufens, by saying that this was to foreshadow the future reign of peace, when kings and emperors should find another occupation besides war, he adds, "and already our generation, however shaken, sees the dawn of a serene epoch. Though born amidst battles, we no longer breathe their fire; a certain profound sentiment of humanity, an increasing gentleness in our souls, and even in our blood, induces us to invite no longer from

afar the causes of war. We have a nobler field for our exertions than that of battles; we have peace." Pray, then, is it very objectionable to try to go forth to meet and welcome this disposition, supposing it genuine, and inquire what are some of the intellectual and moral fruits generally produced by such intervals? Would it not be well to find out what thoughts and what actions will best enable us to secure them for ourselves and for those we love, that is, all men? Without being, as we shall try to show later, Epicureans pretending that Torquatus was of their number, it was observed, and I hope without offence, in a general way, that all men wish to enjoy even here below, every now and then, some intervals of calm and peaceful delight—to have their minds at times, as by a discourse of Crassus, drawn from severity to cheerfulness, which is precisely indeed one of the things that Cicero said an orator ought to be able to effect. We do not say, as I shall take care to distinguish before long, that men are to think and act in any particular way solely in order to obtain such an object; for this consequence may not always follow in the present life; but it seems to me as if there will be no great mischief in suggesting that these hours so highly and so justly prized, for all that our crabbed ones may affirm, cannot be secured, to use ancient words in a better though less pretentious sense than their author attached to them, "nisi sapienter, honeste justeque vivatur *."

And, after all, without making any particular reserves for the wants of one generation, is it not true in every age that much can be learned while appearing only to play? that, as Pope observes,

> "We must be taught as if you taught us not."

"Well, old Lysippus, hast thou done," the ancients said, "in making an image of the Samian Æsop, and placing him in the front of the seven wise men, since they indeed introduced compulsion and not persuasion. But he, by saying seasonable things and playing in earnest, persuades people to be sensible. Now, sharp counsel is a thing to be avoided, but the sweetness of the Samian fable has a pleasant bait."

* Cicero de Finibus, i.

"——— chansons que tout cela!"

Sganarolle says to Ariste, who replies

"——— soit; mais je tiens sans cesse
Qu'il nous faut en riant instruire la jeunesse."

As Chaucer's merchant advises, according to my anti-archæological way of reading the lines, I would say that if you would work as a wise man, "write always so that young people, and above all, women, will be content to read your boke."

"The counsels of old men," says Vauvenargues, "are like the winter's sun, they give light without warming us." Be that as it may, the truth is, that, as Balzac remarks, "Wisdom all dry and raw makes the heart sick. It must be seasoned," says that old Christian. Socrates, he adds, seasoned it with irony. History says that he never spoke directly or absolutely. He was called the mocker. He is always pleasant and full of jokes, in order not to frighten those whom he wished to catch. He avoided the dogmatical tone as if it were an instrument of tyranny and a yoke to oppress our freedom. With such little seriousness does he treat the most serious subjects, that it is clear he thought the shortest way to persuade was to please.

The geometrician is an ass, says a French writer, when he tells us audaciously that the shortest way from one point to another is the straight line. It is the curved line, you silly one. Try to get to the heart of man and woman by your shortest way! Although an illustrious patroness of literary and philosophic aspirants was pleased, in one of her letters lately published, to speak of her dislike for all attempts to sweeten serious subjects—"pour tous les sujets sérieux édulcorés,"—this light way of speaking, for all its lightness, is in accordance with what grave antiquity had always laid down. For "the labour which does not alarm the game to be caught, is, in my opinion," says the Chorus in Sophocles, "the most effectual." We, too, trying to have a good motive for something that we do, may seek to catch some, not as if they were inferior animals, but as if we were trained elephants without our being good ones, employed to take our fellow-creatures, in other respects nobler specimens, far

better and stronger and wiser than ourselves, all which they can be without any great result.

We have heard of certain arms covered with myrtle, and of men clad in women's clothes who have killed tyrants—ugly phrase that, smacking of rather a different school from ours;—but one ought to combat evil in this manner, says a wise old Christian author, and conceal a courageous design under an effeminate appearance. This is one of the tricks and stratagems of those on the right side. It is a kind of deceit or treachery to teach without dogmatizing. O what a noble treason! to do the good one has not promised—to be a physician and seem only a cook—to conceal the safety and freedom of the soul under myrtle in flowers and perfumes—to send away edified those who came for pleasure—to render them not only more joyous and satisfied, but also better and more happy!

I shall not venture to affirm so much of my grand present enterprise, though your geometrician, who is a great friend to straight lines, would be sadly opposed to the different curves which I propose to make. All that can be said is that this book, winding, at least, like our Thames, through the pleasant fields and groves and gardens of other people, is very humbly and very affectionately offered as a sort of companion for a kind of brotherhood that exists amongst us whether we will or no, which might be qualified as that of serene hours, not indeed aspiring to the benefit of being read in chronicles with lords and men of worship—being thrown in fact more among the swans and kingfishers or thrushes, than among learned men—not a society like that of the Argonauts, composed of princes and demigods, of whom, meaning the latter, there is still no lack, if you will believe themselves, but one that while perfectly open to the former whenever they wish to belong to it, though they were as rich as Gellias of Agrigentum, who, we are told, was of that tip-top class of human beings called good fellows, and a very prince of the race, does not exclude any member, however obscure, of the human family—a brotherhood that might be called perhaps the order of the honey-bee or of the water-lily, one whose boat proceedings, too, let me tell you, even when there are no races, but only visitors on board, are conducted with a certain measure and regularity, not more than four members out of

eight being ever allowed to speak at one time on any pretence whatever.

"Virginibus, puerisque canto."

I fear, indeed, that we are about entering on matters a little too jovial and juvenile, and perhaps even innocent, as some one else, like our late poet, would say, for many, amongst whom I would rank myself,—a little too much of the "golden-age order." Perhaps for auditors and judges of such a work one has need to call back those one has known, the sprightly companions of one's happy years, with whom one amassed in common thoughts, words, and actions. Where are they now? Still one calls them back like him who invokes his Theodore, his Armand, his Auguste—one calls them all to one's assistance, we seize them by the arm, shake them, and cry out, "'A moi, mes frères! à moi, mes dévoués! à moi, mes compagnons des beaux jours!" It is at least to such as resemble you, though unknown, that one must look for sympathy and indulgence, when left all but solitary, to experience inclemencies that are new to one, like a last leaf in autumn on a naked branch, that once, on a par with the most flourishing of all the grove, was rich in blossoms, fruit, and foliage of its own. There will be grave thoughts expressed in these pages at times, but none that cannot be made to suit a garden, a hedge-side, a sunny lawn, and a Midsummer's holiday. If you think this impossible, you are not of the mind of Mons. de Sacy, who is of opinion that even metaphysics may be made as amusing as a romance. The occasions for each discussion will be often puerile; but puerile in appearance only, for as Alfred de Musset says of his company on the voyage, "où il vous plaira," all is at the bottom serious in this light world to which we are about to introduce you.

Some works instruct through the head, and their authors must be able men; some through the heart, and any one with human affections can compose them; though, as a great observer says, the last, to which it is wished the present book may belong, reach the widest circle, and often produce in their quiet unostentatious way the most genial influence. As a French writer says of his own composition, "It is grave at the bottom, s'il est un peu gamin dans la forme." I construct and open

it as it were for all comers; for as Anaxandrides says in Greek—

> "'Tis sweet when one has plann'd a new device,
> To tell it to the world. For those who still
> Work for themselves alone, have, first of all,
> No judge to criticize their new invention.
> And envy is their portion too; for all
> That seems to be commended by its novelty,
> Should be imparted freely to the people *."

Upon the whole I would finish this very elaborate prolegomena, which is instead of a preface, by converting to my own use a similitude suggested by Cervantes when concluding the prologue to his tales, and saying, with a slight alteration of his text to suit our particular purpose better, "my intention has been to open on the great river that flows through our metropolis, and at the nearest spot where any thing like rural scenery commences, a new boat-house, with bowling-green, and a swing, and a maze, and places for refreshment, and for games, where people may amuse themselves without losing the rings off their fingers, that is to say, without injury to their souls or bodies; for honest and agreeable exercises do more profit than hurt. In fact, one is not always kneeling in churches and meditating in oratories; what is more to the point, in this instance perhaps, one cannot be always weeping in cold chantries for those who are gone, let them have taken away ever so much of one's heart with them. One is not always occupied with business either, as our author adds, however important may be one's affairs. There are hours of recreation when the fatigued mind and even the sorrowful heart rests. That is the reason why public walks are planted with trees, fountains opened, terraces formed, gardens cultivated. There is one thing I do not hesitate to say," adds this noble Spaniard; "it is this. If I could by any means discover that the reading of this book was likely to suggest to any reader a guilty project or an evil thought, I would cut off the hand that wrote it, rather than deliver it to the public. I am not," he still continues, "of an age to play with the other life. That is all I have to say here.

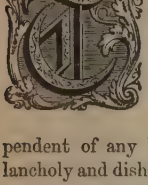
* Athen. v.

excepting may God keep you, reader, and may He grant me patience to support well all the evil that will be said of me by more than four very superior, subtle, and ponderous minds," which is a prayer, undoubtedly, that the present occasion calls for from us here very devoutly, though indeed, as Réné d'Anjou said in the preamble to one of his books, "Je ne l'ay ecrit en aultre intention, fors que pour y povoir faire fructifier les simples gens layz, et non pas pour donner occasion aux grans clercs fondez en haulte doctrine d'arguer encontre." Some of the latter, however, may fasten upon it. Yes, and no doubt there are very sober, grave persons of other classes, that will despatch it in a chamber with a whisper or two. Well, let it be so. To the words of Cervantes I would only add one remark in favour of our own device of a river-side establishment, calling attention to what is termed in common phrase the demand which, I must think and say, without wishing to injure or offend our friends Greeves, or Serle, or Redknaps, seems at least in some quarters to exist for it. For after an able literary notice of the late school of French, or rather European, novelists, who in their way seemed to have formed a place of more imposing attraction, M. Sainte-Beuve concludes by apparently recommending all his friends to have henceforth recourse to one more unpretending, in order, as he says, to find rest for their minds after so much prodigal excess in the way of unrestrained gigantic genius. "Let us," he says, "wish for our society in future pictures no less vast, but more subdued in colouring; equally true to life, but more consoling. Let us wish for every one, whether author or reader, an existence more tranquillizing, and inspirations not more penetrating, but more softened, more natural in a wholesome way; and," he adds, as if, good man, he actually foresaw our coming in to pilfer from his woods, and wished to leave us something to pick up that would suit our purpose to a nicety, "more serene*."

Well, we can hardly be said to have got afloat as yet; our first assembling having been only to settle preliminaries. We talked about one thing or another, in fact, more about one thing or another than any thing else; and perhaps such will be the proper report to give later of many of our subsequent rambles.

* Causeries du Lundi, tom. ii.

CHAPTER II.



HERE is such a thing as being saucy and ungrateful to places as well as to men. See with what an air of lofty indifference, not to say scorn, that stranger casts a kind of impatient look up the river as he walks over Westminster Bridge. The truth is, if you could read his interior at the moment, independent of any legitimate ground for displeasure, he feels melancholy and disheartened as he sees it under that powerless sun, as it seems to him, which imparts no colour to any object; and yet this is the identical individual who only a short time ago esteemed the Thames almost as a kind of third parent, so infinitely did he respect and admire it in his school days, when like Ulysses he would have kissed the ground near which it flowed. It is not that he loves the memory of his boyhood, and that the river rolling under the stone, or indeed now iron arch seems to him to mutter dirge-like in his ear "'tis past," though there may be something in that too; it is not that he dreads "the charm of that mysterious repose associated with the dark mournful waters upon which he looks down"—all this, by the way, gathered from the duke's woods,—but it is, if you will have the exact explanation, that our young man has been abroad lately, under certainly brighter skies and along mightier streams, and so now, even without thinking of what exists near them that is far better, he is actually wondering at himself for having ever wished to pass his life upon such meads and banks as Petersham, towards which he looks, could boast of,—

> "Where they sat in Englyshe wood
> Under the green-wode tre."

Well, this is a feeling belonging only to a state of transition, and it will pass away. Grand and heroic as may be the Rhine with its knightly towers and romantic legends, inspiring the celebrated Vogt in his Rheinische Geschichten und Sagen—dear to the poet and the painter as may be the Rhone, for the possession of which the two estates of Provence and Languedoc

contended *, lovely and inspiring as are Italian lakes, sublime as are Alpine snows and Danubian forests, divine and salutary in a personal way as are some things associated with them, we can't be always among them. With the exception of the latter, which in essentials are illimitable, necessity puts an end to our consorting with them—

Ἀλλὰ πολὺ πλέονες καὶ κρείσσονες ἦγον ἀνάγκῃ.

And in such times as these, at least with our dispositions, it is all the better for us. Ours is a smoky city, and there is no denying that dark vapours often rest upon the waters that approach its towers; but to persons who affect to pity us for breathing such an atmosphere, those who love serene hours may very aptly reply in the words of Alcuin to Charlemagne, when the emperor rallied him for remaining at "smoky Tours," when he could repair to the bright air of a distant capital, which was then exposed to hostile collisions, just as nearly the whole continent is at present. "Magis ferrum nocet oculis," said the Englishman, "quam fumus." He for his part was content with the smoky locality where the providence of God enabled him to enjoy peace †. However, let our tastes be what they may, or the times ever so favourable, after a month or a year or two passed in sunny regions, necessity, circumstance, reality, or what you like, bring us again in presence of poor old ill-used Father Thames; and after a few sullen pauses and awkward nods of cold recognition from a distance, as if he were to be blamed for every thing, we pass an hour near him, then a whole day, and so on by degrees, cultivating again our ancient intimacy with him, remarking the changes that have taken place in him since we were boys; and at length in spite of contrasts, the bringing about of which three hundred years ago was not owing to his fault, we accommodate ourselves to necessities; our former love returns for him, and we feel at home in the new-fashioned shallow bauble boats that he treats so tenderly upon his patient breast, and we put our feet under his mantle, and when the weather is warm make him cover us over head and heels; and it is again upon

* Papon, Hist. Gén. de Provence.
† Alcuin, Epist. xiii.

his tranquil bosom that we seek to forget our troubles, and enjoy as far as we are able the charm of a serene hour.

The winter with its winds having departed from the sky, the bright period of flower-bearing spring is smiling, and the earth has arrayed itself in green, and plants full of juice are in leaf with young petals, and the meadows drinking the tender dew of morning are golden with bright floral cups; and now, to insert a twig not stolen, amidst all this classical booty, the long yellow boats are moved from their sheds, and launched along the shores, and men and boys are rowing them over the river stream, while the zephyr is causing the sails of heavy barges to swell out with its harmless breath; and on every side the race of birds sing with a shrill note,—the swallows about dwellings, the swan, at least one may say as much, on the reedy bank, and the nightingale in the grove; bees, too, are humming through the luminous air, and the whole world, with the exception of too grave and too busy men, is joyous; the young at the close of each day are dancing, and the old delighted with looking on. Even the language of the Greek poet, as in this passage, does not for Spenser, when describing May, sufficiently express a joyous and impulsive feeling. He has to break forth in exclamations to satisfy his animal spirits full of imagination and fancy, crying out—

> "Lord! how all creatures laugh'd when her they spied,
> And leap'd and danced as they had ravish'd been;
> And Cupid's self about her flutter'd all in green."

We too, then, as not insensible, have "longen with other folk," as Chaucer says, to go on some excursion or another, enjoying ourselves in a way that was not perhaps wholly unknown to those who said of old that they had been

> "On the hills of Armeny, where they saw Noe's ark,
> With holy Job and Saint George in Southwark,
> At Saint Richard, and at Saint Roke,
> And at our Lady that standeth in the oke *."

Indeed, a vagrant, somewhat like one of ourselves, with another

* The four P's by Heywood.

old poet, justly remarks that in this respect extremes may be said to meet. His words are these: "O, sir, you have heard of Pilgrims, and the voluntary travels of good men. I am not to bring these into comparison—but, pardon me, to think their sufferings are much sweetened by delight, such as we find by shifting places and air." Be that as it may, we would fain now be abroad upon some progress with you. Shall we make a fling to Vauxhall or Pimlico, and see how the spring appears there in the Spring-garden? No; that will be too public for our recreation. We would have it more within ourselves. Think of some other course, then. We are for you upon any way, as far as boat, as horse, as hands, as arms, or feet can help us. We must be jogging while our boots are green. I suppose there can be no great harm in thinking that some will join our party to whom may be addressed the lines which will strike a common reader as innocent enough—

"Amans, heureux amans, voulez-vous voyager?
Que ce soit aux rives prochaines.
Soyez-vous l'un à l'autre un monde toujours beau,
Toujours divers, toujours nouveau;
Tenez-vous bien de tout, comptez pour rien le reste."

What could Alcuin mean when in his simple pastoral calendar he called May Pleasure-month, but that we should be off and out for the day in some direction or another? So we have taken to the heath, the river, and the fields sweet with the yellow cowslip and the pale primrose; and though not ourselves minstrels, we must pay our homage to the season, and with the children of the old world sing some such ditty as—

"The swallow, the swallow, has burst on the sight,
She brings us gay seasons of vernal delight;
Her back it is sable, her belly is white.
She is come, she is come
To her sunny home;
And white is her breast as a beam of light,
But her back and her wings are as black as night.
The swallow, the swallow
Upon you doth wait;

Set open, set open
Your gate and your door;
Neither giants nor greybeards—
We your bounty implore."

Well, doors are thrown open; the young have gained the day, and we are off with them. Yes, as each will say, in the words of the song,

"——— No more I'll flatter,—
Farewell, you may chatter;
I'm off, like a hatter,"

though by no means after the fashion of that German emperor who traversed the states of the Visconti's, as Villani says, "with the precipitation of a merchant going to the fair;" for, albeit we have no imperial or other dignity to preserve, we intend to take it quietly, and to stop as often as we like,—a plan which is every day becoming really more meritorious; for who is not in a hurry now? The darkies may well complain, and sing—

"All de world is in commotion,
People scarcely time to dream;
Nothing else but locomotion,
Eb'ry ting is done by steam.
Quiet times are out of fashion,
And 'tis tought quite a disgrace,
If in this world you can't dash on,
At a break-neck railroad pace:
For eb'ry body must go flying,
Fizzing, fizzing, oh, oh, oh!
'Heave ahead!' all folks are crying,—
'Steam's up, and away we go.'"

"Fie upon these roads!" exclaims Janin, "which carry you off breathless, without leaving you time to admire the tree or listen to the bird, or to rest upon the river's bank and enjoy the sweet breeze of an April morning." Excursionists of our sort go like lovers and sages, who are never in a hurry to arrive. These others rush on like madmen, who care for nothing. They have at their side the shining river, the island resplendent with green and the blossom of the hawthorn; they can sit on that bank, or

follow that path which winds under the willows; and yet forsooth they must associate themselves with these thunder-bolts, which carry off the human race. Ah! commend me to my boat —the Jane or the Alarm; she starts when I wish, and stops when I wish; if I want to go to the right, she goes to the right, and if to the left, she turns to the left. We are all the kings and lords of the boat, in which we carry with us whatever we want, women and children, books and musical instruments; and so on we go, chatting and singing, and whistling or silent, and taking our rest. This is the invention for us, as our friend adds; and, in fact, we are as proud of it, alas! at least we used to be, as if we had invented it ourselves; therefore now, since the year grows fresh in juicy stalks, as Keats the poet says,

> "My little boat I'll smoothly steer for many quiet hours,
> With streams that deepen freshly into bowers."

So now, to speak in river language of this literary project, our tight vessel makes way freely both with wind and stream, and we have nothing else to do but to enjoy ourselves. Aye, you may think so, some one may gravely reply, following suit as it were with images from river incidents, but shortly you will neither sail nor row; there is a shallow place ahead that will soon make you look ridiculous enough in sensible people's eyes; or there's the roaring wear, down which they will see you drifting, where, as an old woman said, though he can swim like a duck there is no salvation for any one that gets on it. And there are other things in plenty besides that one can contemplate which will no doubt put a speedy and shameful end to your excursion; or rather, to us looking on coolly, your whole projected course, for that is what we meant when speaking of these sinister casualties, may be already set down as a mistake and a failure; since one can foresee that your line of argument from first to last must prove delusive and improper, highly perilous, and every way objectionable.

All right, grave objector; your sharp eyes have not the exclusive privilege of discerning the danger; we also see it, and the force of the stream too, and yet we don't mean to run aground or get dashed on the wears, or fall into the lock, with you clinging about our neck to sink us to the bottom of it, or

get capsized by the barge-rope. We can foresee what you are going to find fault with, and you shall be answered before we pull a stroke farther; or, rather, as you are not likely to come even as far as the boat with us, before we step across the threshold.

> "An hour of quiet shortly shall we see,
> Till then, in patience our proceeding be."

As we are not writing a romance full of dramatic scenes, but on the contrary a sort of simple fragmentary history of a summer interspersed with reflections, it is only right that we should proceed, even in this old-fashioned way, with calm and secure steps, leaving all the hurry, and excitement, and pleasure incident to excursions of this kind to be rather supposed each time than described.

In order then that we may have a solid and immoveable resting-ground of truth for all that we shall say, and that the whole order of our book may begin from what cannot be contradicted with justice, we must set out by observing very gravely, and as if we were going to the schools rather than to a pleasure party, that though we are formed for happiness, or, as we may say, for serene hours indefinitely protracted, we do not hold that men are to act merely with a view of obtaining this result in the present life, nor do we seek to imitate that verbal picture of Cleanthes in which the virtues were represented waiting on Pleasure as handmaidens who have nothing else to do but minister to her while she is seated on a throne in regal state *. Our poor brotherhood lately spoken of does not exactly want to place the summum bonum in contentment of this kind, as if they had adopted the opinion of Ulysses that to be seated together in order feasting and hearing songs is the finest and most beautiful of all things. This is not at all what their mind calls on them to pronounce; and therefore we have no need of accommodating what we say to such a principle. Whoever has caught the spirit of the thing knows without being told that serene hours, as well as pleasure of all kinds, must often be sacrificed for a thousand reasons to duty in some form or

* Cicero de Finibus, ii.

other. He knows that men are not praised or thought much of for having enjoyed themselves. As even an ancient philosopher would remind us, neither those extolled by Homer, nor Cyrus, nor Agesilaus, nor Aristides, nor Themistocles, nor Philip, nor Alexander, owe their immortality to such things, though, between ourselves, one cannot help thinking that if they had condescended to accept a few of them, it would not have done them much harm either, however their celebrity might have suffered. However, we know that these worthies, all Pagans as they were, did not esteem it the chief good to have a few serene hours. Much less are we to ascribe thoughts so degenerate to the most obscure Christian Tom or Harry, "or any other man," that takes boat at Chelsea or walks to Hampstead fields; though I am free to confess he may think himself to be better employed even during such an interval than were many of those worthies, who counted it glorious to subdue by conquest far and wide,

> "To rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave,"

and must be entitled for it all—

> "Great benefactors of mankind, deliverers."

True, all the authority of philosophy, as Theophrastus says, with which all the object of religion is so far identical, consists in preparing or procuring a happy life: "Beate enim vivendi cupiditate incensi omnes sumus." True, as Cowley says,—

> "When Epicurus to the world had taught
> That pleasure was the chiefest good
> (He was, perhaps, i' th' right, if rightly understood)."

But your "if" is a great confounder of inordinate wishes; and a notable difference between us and the pupils of that garden school consists in this, that we set out with acknowledging that pleasure and serene hours in this life, so far from being our ultimate object, must frequently be given up from choice without a moment's deliberation, and every thing apparently most opposite to them embraced and clung to. The truth is, as with a heavy heart I suggested from the beginning, there is no great danger of excess in regard to what we are supposed to have in

view at present. "Are you one of those that are called happy?" asks a great author. "There is not a day," he continues, "that you are not sad. Each day has its chagrin, its cares, its anxieties, its fears, and so on. One cloud passes over; another cloud forms. Hardly is there one day in a hundred of clear sunshine; and you are of the small number who are called happy! As for the rest of men, stagnant night is over them. Reflecting persons seldom use these locutions—the happy and the unhappy. In this world, evidently the vestibule of another (and pray remark that expression coming from so independent a thinker), there are no happy. The true human division is this—the enlightened and the benighted. Diminish the number of the latter; increase that of the former. Here is the great end*." And we poor excursionists, some of us at least with hearts half broken, are far from wishing to lose sight of it, even in moments when we invoke oblivion as to cares, and commit ourselves to the stream of Thamesis.

No doubt in every age some persons have laid themselves open to grave objection on this score. There is, for instance, the "Essai sur l'Art d'être heureux," by Droz, in which the author seems to overlook these distinctions while acknowledging that to succeed in this whimsical sort of study, as it would seem to most people, there must be proper dispositions, favourable circumstances, and an assiduous attention to the precepts. But, not to remark with a commentator, M. de Sacy, that this art is addressed only to persons already supposed to be happy, that it can teach them nothing, being like those treatises of versification which teach poets less than they know, and do not teach others the poetry of which they are ignorant, what is this innocent prosody of such serene hours or happiness as a thing to be realized on earth? How many objections, as he justly observes, to this theory of a felicitous life! This detachment from all desires and longing for things, this systematic mediocrity, this lukewarm temperature of soul which fears every emotion, this artificial calm and easy compliance,—can this be happiness? this art of being happy,—is it only the art of remaining tranquil? In the last years of his life, changing philosophy for

* Victor Hugo.

revealed religion, M. Droz said, in speaking of his "Essai" on the art of happiness, "Ce livre ne contient pas la véritable morale." This Essay was the chimerical enterprise of an excellent man. He was preoccupied, doubtless, by the afflicting axiom of the physician, Elii de la Poterie, that three-quarters of mankind die of sorrow,—testimony that is corroborated by Dr. Auerbach of Leipzic, who says that more of his patients have died from melancholy than from any other cause. He thought to deliver them from this scourge. It was his maxim that the best books are those that most resemble good actions. By the intention it was the best of books. But its fault consisted in his making, à priori, a theory of happiness, as if it could be solved without first determining the question on which it depends,—respecting the end of man, and the object he should accomplish. If the law of his existence be not happiness, why seek happiness? The ancients searched for the sovereign good. Happiness was not the direct object of their speculations; it was only implicitly engaged in this famous controversy, which contained, according to Varro, 288 solutions. Alone the philosophy of Epicurus identified the sovereign good with happiness, which consisted in a tranquil life, of moderate desires, avoiding danger and pain, tasting pleasure as a preservative against sorrow, cultivating a careless wisdom, raised above life as on a cliff over the sea. According to Plato, the sovereign good is the divine beauty and the supreme truth, in the study of which with love is man's happiness. Zeno banished happiness altogether from his theory of the sovereign good; he made it consist in firmness and indifference. For St. Augustine, thinking as a philosopher, the sovereign good is the ideal beauty, the infinite truth, of which Plato spoke, but that beauty and truth in God, and incarnate in Jesus Christ; and happiness is the contemplation of them with the aid of grace.

All these philosophers, continues M. de Sacy, were, with regard to their speculations, at the same time in the right and in the wrong. Their systems reflected a part of the human soul, and responded to a part of its wants. The true philosophy is that which reunited them all, and completes one by the other. For each creature the sovereign good consists in the accomplishment of the end for which it was made. The good

for the plant is to grow and vegetate under the sun and dew; the good for the animal is to live and feed without conscience or reflection. Well then, the nature of man, to speak in a human way, reveals also in part the secret of his destined end, and consequently of his good. He is not an angel, neither is he only a body; he is a body and a soul. Can one doubt that after the supreme end revealed from on high, as stated in the simplest catechism, in accordance with the light of reason and that of the Gospel, namely, perfection and the happiness which is in God,—constituting a generous doctrine that excludes the principle of selfishness, since it proposes something universal to which every human being can aspire,—"who can doubt," says De Sacy, "that insubordination to this final end," the good of this being endowed with sensibility, activity, and intelligence, consists in the development and expansion of all these faculties? He must love, he must work and exert himself, he must seek the truth. His good, speaking generally, is in the satisfaction of all these forces; but they are infinite, and cannot be satisfied on earth. Some fragments of truth will not quench his thirst for knowing the whole of it. Creatures that change and die cannot satisfy the insatiable faculty of love which fills his heart. Hence even, philosophically speaking, however we may fancy serene hours multiplied, the end, the supreme good of the human creature, cannot be accomplished in this world; and this impossibility is one source of his immortal hopes.

Further, it is only by dint of his suffering, and of his sacrifices without number, that he can hope to make any progress in relation to this supreme good, and realize a relative good amidst terrible shocks and a thousand obstacles. Where then is happiness or the doctrine of serene hours, as falsely understood? There is in this world a road that leads to both; it is that of good, rightly interpreted and in the high Christian sense; but the end of the road and of our vows is placed beyond this world and all its groves and gardens. The earth, we must resign ourselves to feel assured, is not the vale of beatitude, it is the field of battle. Elsewhere are the joys of victory and the crown of happiness, made partly with our blood and with our tears. Men were strong, and they have suffered; the equilibrium of which moralists speak between virtue and happiness,

they have found broken here below, but it can be re-established elsewhere; and without doubt, disengaged from the body and from earth, the infinite powers of our soul will take a new flight. Life, he continues, still arguing as a philosopher, has deceived us even with regard to the enjoyment of serene hours, since persons or circumstances have been wanting to us. Well, we must have confidence in death. Meanwhile, he continues, we must believe no theory of happiness. The moralist may tell us to limit our desires and our avidities. That's all very right; but we must place no limits to our faculties and our aspirations. Our part is to love, feel, know, act, suffer, and, above all, to beware lest through a fond desire of being serene and happy too soon, we should smother in our soul the germ itself of all serenity and of all happiness. Of course we must desire happiness, he goes on to say, and we are no doubt intended for it; but we are in the first place formed for good, the secret of which is revealed by the Christian philosophy. Perfectible creatures, capable of conceiving and loving good, our first effort must be to attain it even at the price of a thousand suffering and bitter hours, which are often steps towards it. It is at the end and elsewhere that good and happiness or serene hours meet together to part no more. If God in this world grants us some joy, some minutes of rest, as it were, in a wayside arbour, —and there is no misery which does not contain some particle of pleasure,—we must confess it to be given as something over and above what in our present condition there was reason to expect. A sad fate awaits him who has not prepared himself to struggle and to suffer for good. He opens for himself beforehand the abyss of disappointed hopes. The development of our divine faculties,—active energy, understanding, and love,—that, after what religion reveals, is the supreme object which ought to attract us more than happiness in any form. The danger of the industrial spirit of our age, he adds, consists in our being torn from these superior preoccupations and from these truths which alone can explain, direct, and sweeten life. The modern literature is responsible for many moral disorders of our times. Without joining in all the accusations against it, can we think it to be without reproach? Our romantic writers have often analyzed with a delicate penetration the weaknesses

of the heart and the passions that are so fruitful in storms; they have shown us our ardour and our failings in the pursuit of happiness and of serene hours, in their sense of them. But the ardour for good, in its true Christian sense, which is so necessary even for the attainment of these intervals,—energy for the happiness of others, devotion to others, firmness superior to passions and to suffering,—persons uttering the resigned words of Job, all resting on the true principle that our supreme good and even happiness must be looked for elsewhere,—lo! that is what they have too often neglected to show us in their pictures of human life; and, accordingly, how many unhappy persons are there who suffer to lie dormant, or to wither in the germ, all their faculties? If you doubt it, look across the street, see them returning home at sunrise, dissipated and miserable; or read the public journals, and hear what is related of those living in the same town with you—how they throw themselves off towers, off bridges, off pillars, into the Serpentine! How many devoted to their egotistic passions, sunk in their deaf personality, to which they have given every thing, and which nothing can satisfy, disenchanted with the world and with themselves, drag along the burdens of a life which justly disgusts them? Do you think that it is such men who are swayed by the right desire of serene hours? that it is they who are capable of enjoying them, and who represent, as it were, the effects of realizing them? So far otherwise, we are bound by the very principles, taken for granted in recommending this kind of pleasure, to consider them as so many self-murderers. They have, as this author concludes, committed suicide. You do not find them laid out in the dead-house; they breathe, they speak, they walk, but their heart beats no longer; theirs is, indeed, the dead heart, they can neither think, nor love, nor suffer*.

Well, you see by the aid of what we have picked up from others whose branches we have touched a little, to make them the exact thing for our own use, how well armed we can be at times, and prepared to defend our project against all comers. But starting is always better than tarrying, as Alfred de Musset says in the prolegomena to his "Voyage où il vous plaira."

* Variétés littéraires.

Perhaps we have stopped too long, while some are tearing their hair at such a delay, or bidding us remember our covenant to be merry, and wishing this preamble rent in a thousand pieces; and, in truth, those who were for laying hold of us thus, and involving us in the necessity of dwelling at such length on questions of this sort, took a very unfair advantage of our situation. It was picking a German quarrel with us to insist on our pointing out all these distinctions as a preliminary. It is in this way that people grow old preparing, and never accomplishing. At the bottom, if they have not quite lost their wits, they are themselves agreed with us; and if any are to complain, it is rather we, that might call on them to amend their language, and speak like other people. For if you will bear with me but for an instant longer, I should like to ask these grave, captious people what sort of philosophy is this which speaks in a common way on ordinary occasions, as it needs must, and in its own way in its books and hours of opposition, especially when they change nothing but names and words, the same thing remaining, only in another mode? For what does it matter that you call things generally esteemed by a new and perhaps ugly name, and not say simply that they are all right, when he who calls them all right does not attribute the least more to them than you do who name them after a peculiar fashion of your own*? But thus it is; all arts have still had their adversaries; and ours the most ignorant.

Do leave us, then, to talk of going out for the day, and of serene hours, like the rest of the world, without insisting on our putting on the academic cap of wisdom, as we start on a ramble to amuse ourselves. Every one knows, indeed, as M. de Sacy says, and as we have already admitted from first to last, that there are mistakes to be guarded against in recommending and using what is to be implied or spoken of in this book. "Men," as he observes, "will always read Horace and Montaigne. The air of which they teach the morality can alarm no one;" yet if we wish to struggle against the torrent of worldly Epicureanism, of modern materialism, against false taste, and false notions of human worth, some will not conclude from such premises with

* De Finibus, iv.

him, that it is necessary they should be armed with the panoply of writers who go to extreme lengths on the contrary side, exaggerate things that no one denies, ignore humanity, and propose a standard savouring after all more of the porch than of the Christian schools. No doubt we should read and study grave and solid authors, meditating on them, too, without which we shall all be in desolation. By their means we shall be able to preserve at least the intelligence of those great ideas of which the traces begin to be effaced amongst the scientific and literary classes. With the thundering darts of their eloquence we shall be made to remember that there is something else in this world besides hours of pleasure, and days of business, too, for that matter; and that if we cannot all be expected to suit the highest mansions prepared for humanity hereafter, at least we have all a spiritual and noble nature, which, with a view to lower degrees of ultimate happiness, ought not to be sacrificed to any thing, to any conventionalism, or any person. But it is no less the dictate of common sense that we should also assume the just rights with which we are doubly invested; distinguish honest and laudable use from a malicious and detestable abuse of things; and so armed with that good sense and moderation, proceed to turn to some account or other that we shall not be ashamed of, these serene hours as every thing else which Heaven may vouchsafe to grant us.

"But, dear me! and dear every one!" some one will again exclaim, "what a start is this for a morning when 'vernal blackbirds, with sweet-voiced songs, chaunt various-noted melodies, while yellow nightingales respond with their plaints!'" You are "a cure, a perfect cure,"—to keep on talking like that, while every one is anxious to be off; this petty brabble will undo us all. Well, I fear that we shall be often betrayed into such digressions, and sooth to say, when employed on them, we may find each place awful slow. Here is, at all events, enough for to-day—"sat prata biberunt." However, on this occasion there really was no help for it; we were obliged to anticipate a grave objection, and reply to him who was determined to stop us 'in limine,' and perhaps, cool, cantankerous old carper, to scowl at us for the rest of the week. For let me tell you, he had dreadful intentions, as you might suspect from the way he

looked at us;—he was going to accuse us of believing in neither heaven nor saint, true Sardanapaluses, with ears closed to all Christian remonstrances, holding language like the pagan Jucundus in the old play, who says, "Enjoyment's the great rule; ask yourself, 'Have I made the most of things?' That's what I say to the rising generation. What's fame? What's power? I've often thought the hog is the only really wise animal. We should be happier if we were all hogs." This is just what he expected us to say. He identified us with 'l'anima purcina,' the spirit of pork. This is the doctrine that he proposed setting himself very gravely and solidly to disprove by most authentic testimonies, which should demonstrate into the bargain that the author of such a book was ῥαβδοδίαιτος ἀνήρ, a fellow worthy of a stick. We had our good censor there, I think; but, indeed, we can have him every where, while in opposition to common sense he will be for blaming and suspecting what we shall have to suggest in the sequel.

Well, he stays at home, and will have time to look again over his testimonies and authorities; as Miranda says of her father when hard at study, "He's safe for these three hours." We can now at last be fairly off, telling him, by way of adieu, and falling in with his favourite figure, that, as the humorous and truly classical song says, we are resolved for the day on having "the whole animal or none;" we can jump into the boat, row on, or rest on our oars, as our fancy may be. We feel ourselves, for the nonce, masters of the situation, and may even thank him for the interruption, saying,

> "Après ce beau discours, toute la confrérie
> Doit un remerciment à votre seigneurie."

Let us proceed, then, to summon up our *meiny*, and consider what in general may be advanced in favour of the views of those persons who wish to partake of intervals of the kind that we propose to enjoy; though I must indeed repeat it, that I see no very great good in seeking reasons for a thing so simple —for a thing, too, which will no doubt by many be set down as being not reasonable, while it will not be in the least worse for that reason; though whatever the latter objectors may say, we could give plenty both of low and high reasons for believing

in the excellence of serene hours. However, we must needs go on; and as most people, to repeat the witty remark and policy of an antagonistic writer, are really fondest of low reasons, we will take care not to omit the low ones.

With the exception, then, of your "steady-going people, who have no vagrancy in their souls," there is, as we said already, the common consent of men and women every where approving and requiring intervals of the kind for which we must make provision; not left without the salutary warning of experience, too, in order to show their wisdom, since, as Hegio says in Plautus, "A captive at liberty is like a bird that's wild; if opportunity is once given for escaping, 'tis enough; after that you can never catch him." Have not the Italians their 'villeggéatura' at the end of autumn; rather late, to be sure, but I suppose they can't help it; the French their oft-repeated 'semaine de congé,' and even their departures to the country for the fine season, beginning it as we do; the English their holidays all the year round, and their occasional vacations, when every man, like Bob Sawyer, puts up the shutters, as it were, and leaves business to take care of itself, whether it takes care of him or not, and starts, with his friend and his dog, in some direction or another, in an ecstasy of mirth, perhaps mounted, like that hero of a famous author, outside some carriage, displaying a pocket-handkerchief attached to a walking-stick—though such demonstrations are low, and we are for keeping the honour of reputation—which he occasionally waves in the air, with various gestures indicative of supremacy and defiance; though, I repeat it, this is vile, "unless," as Lorenzo says, "it may be quaintly ordered, and better, in my mind, not undertook?" Collective professions maintain their right to be allowed such intervals. Nay, a whole nation sometimes, as if one man, seeks serene hours and to enjoy itself, saying in the person of its representative, like the husbandman whom the poet invests with a similar character, "Measure me out a particle of peace, if it be but for ever so short a term; at least drop for me one drop of peace; anoint my eyes with it." No exaggerated expression this of an improbable sentiment. France, said the Count de Maistre, in 1706, desired with passion no longer any thing but repose.

But waiving our right to claim examples and authorities, in

the first place, it seems clear to those who have studied the Georgics of the mind, as your Virgilian lad would say, that nature—by which we understand the divine idea or plan of the supreme Contriver of all things—as a general rule, requires these interruptions to the ordinary avocations of life. "In all things," as Electra says, "change is pleasant." She might have added necessary, too.

As we are afloat upon the Thames, with swans alongside of us, let me begin by invoking them as arbiters in the quarrel which we suppose; for I foresee it will more or less be revived to the last day of our excursion. Why, then, should we deem ourselves worse off in this respect than these serene birds, or condemned for having some of their instincts? "To the advantages of nature," says Buffon, "the swan unites those of liberty; he is not of the number of those slaves whom we can constrain and shut up. A swan placed in a court is always sad; he uses all his efforts to escape and fly away; and he does fly away if you do not clip his wings each season. I have seen one, says M. Baillon, who lived in this state for three years; he was restless or gloomy, always thin and silent, though he was plentifully supplied with every kind of suitable food. He succeeded at last in flying away. Free upon our waters, he only sojourns on them, and establishes himself only so far as he can enjoy independence so as to exclude all idea of captivity. He must be free to move up and down as it pleases him, land on such a bank, push off to the middle, or coast along the shore, shelter under the banks, hide himself in the reeds, seek refuge in the furthest pools, and then, leaving his solitude, return to society, and enjoy the pleasure which he seems to seek in approaching man." So much, then, for the notions of these aquatic fowl; it agrees with those of your reasoning bipeds as far as relates to the vital importance of such intervals as we are now going to enjoy. But recurring to human testimonies, and to omit all commonplace remarks about bows alway bent, and other such formal lessons, let us hear what wiser and better men than most of us are likely to be have to say on this point. "To those who reprove our leisure," says Balzac, whom I am proud to place at the head of our deputation to the reader, "I reply, that the stupor of laziness has nothing in common with

the delights of idleness. This latter awakens, sharpens, purifies the senses; the former sends to sleep, blunts, and corrupts them. The one leaves us our freedom, the other subdues us. A man is possessed by laziness, he enjoys idleness. It is mind which constitutes its charm; it is an image of the life of heaven, and there is no sweeter meat upon the earth." Pretty bold this, you perceive, for an exordium. But there is something stronger still to comfort us. Henry Stephens, then, you must know, confesses that he was born with a disposition to idleness, with a propensity to a thoughtless life of leisure. "Henry Stephens idle!" exclaims M. de Sacy; and what is more, this grave author adds that he believes it. "I am convinced," he says, "even that all men of genius are born so." Gilfillan, in his Gallery of Literary Portraits, classes Dr. Johnson as indolent, and this paradox is the more startling, as De Quincey says, "because he does not utter it as a careless opinion, but as a concession extorted from him reluctantly; he had sought to evade it, but could not." The Duc de Saint Simon tells us that D'Aguesseau, the greatest chancellor that France had seen for many ages, was by nature of the same disposition. "It is only foolish, slow, and heavy minds," adds De Sacy, "that naturally love labour for labour's sake; for them labour is only a mechanical exercise, without which they would not feel that they lived." They need violent emotions to satisfy the kind of strange aversion which they feel for rest of mind and body; they must be always renewing their agitated atmosphere by new agitations; every week they must change their abode from one place to another, quarrel or make it up with some one person or object. In a word, as De Sacy continues, "their head and their hands work. Their heart and their soul do not work. It is the work of the soul that alone fatigues. We fear that. We live so happy with our own dreams. It is so sweet to do nothing when we are with ourselves. 'Bella cosa far niente,' says Madame de Sévigné; yet after all you see what this idle Henry Stephens achieved *."

"How I hate work!" writes an indefatigable labourer in the fields of literature; "and how I hate with a rare hate the stupid necessity (ever self-imposed, in fact, a really unnecessary ne-

* Variétés littéraires.

cessity) of poking over jobs, and putting off joys, and so missing the tide, and blundering on towards old age, with both eyes out! Summer, I find, has just three days of sunshine, for the rallying of friends and renewal of field associations, and these always gallop past one, or catch one in the middle of an imposed task, and seem to vanish with a smile of contempt thrown back at one's practical incapability to be happy. I begin to think idleness your only true philosophy *."

But let us again hear our chief spokesman, Balzac. All you who accompany us are naturally enough made rather uneasy at the very word idleness, and perhaps some one will proceed to deliver himself in eloquent terms respecting its evil, reminding us of the words of a great observer, who says that "a vacant hour is always the devil's hour; and that to sit down without an object is to jump into a thicket of temptations." What you say is very well; but still, after all, demands Balzac, "is it not true also that there is a charm and an innocent one in taking rest? Have you not read in Tacitus, 'Invisa primum inertia postremo amatur?'" "Take my word and experience upon it," says the poet Gray, "doing nothing is a most amusing business." Even the ancient Stoics recommended it: you must give yourself, says one of them, a holiday from time to time; "the framers of laws actually instituted days in which men were publicly to be compelled (they are his words) to hilarity, as necessary to temper labours; and some great men would suffer no day to pass without its interval of recreation. The mind requires indulgence; and there must be leisure hours to walk abroad in open places, and refresh the mind and body with the aspect of the sky, and to change the scene by means of some conveyance, in order to see other neighbourhoods, and even taste of other food †."

No doubt, as Chaucer says, "idleness in one sense is the gate of all harms; this sluggy slumbering maketh a man be heavy and dull in body and in soul, doing all things with slackness and unlust;" but the interval we defend is not like the leisure or Kef of the Turks—term of which it is difficult to render the exact sense, further than that it expresses the idea of an

* Correspondence of Leigh Hunt, i. 325.

† Sen. de tranquillitate animi.

enjoyment which consists in repose and inaction, as if suited to those who are like your swifts or great swallows, who have but two ways of existence, violent movement and absolute rest. Neither is it what we have been gravely and politely accused of recommending—the leisure hour of the Lazzaroni that sleeps by day more than the wild cat, liking the sun, liking his macaroni, and, with the exception of his superstition, as an indulgent critic calls it, that of the brute. No, not exactly, my learned Theban. What we stand up for is only the change that nature requires from the most active and intelligent and Anglo-Saxon of men, a thing quite compatible with that energy, that courage and constancy which are inspired by remembering that "our Lord quitteth every good deed, be it never so little." Though supposing even that it were not absolutely necessary, but only conducive to the comfort of man's life,

> "Why brand these pleasures with the name
> Of soft, unsocial toils, of indolence and shame?
> Search but the garden or the wood,
> Let yon admired carnation own,
> Not all was meant for raiment or for food,
> Not all for needful use alone;
> There while the seeds of future blossoms dwell,
> 'Tis colour'd for the sight, perfumed to please the smell."

Petrarch had certainly a wise friend in that Bishop of Cavaillon, who observing his excessive ardour for study, went to him one day, and asked for the key of his press, which the other gave him immediately, not suspecting in the least what he meant to do with it, when the good Bishop, after locking up with it both his papers and his ink-bottle, said to him, "I order you to be for ten days without reading or writing." But the third day the poor creature was in a fever, when the Bishop had to give him back the keys to save his life*. But then every one in England is not exactly made like this Italian sonneteer and philosopher.

There is, says Balzac, chiming in with all these excellent voices, a certain sweetness at times very lawful in what some

* De Sade, Mém. pour la Vie de Pétrarque, tom. i. 404.

people would call doing nothing, a certain delicious ease like that described in the enchanted palaces of the age of Amadis. After once tasting this sweetness it is easy to lose the memory of all things; it makes us snap our fingers at reputation, at the promises we gave the public, and the advantages which enemies can take of us. Such is the state at present of one you know. Thus does he seek pretexts and reasons for being legitimately idle. But were he ever so diligent, how do you think that his strength could correspond to such courage? Then follows the affecting passage already alluded to. "If you could separate," he adds, "from the life of your friend the days which grief and sadness have cut off from it, you would find that since he has been in the world he has not lived a whole year. And if he should employ the few moments he can snatch up for enjoyment in refreshing himself after his pains and in consoling himself for past calamities, it seems to me that envy itself might pass him by unnoticed. Strange bitterness!" he continues, "you blame the length of time which is employed in production, (they wanted him to write something more,) and you never blame those who produce nothing. Others can play and joke and amuse themselves all their lives long; and you reproach him for the time that he employs in feeling and praising one serene hour." Yet such are the complaints of men still amongst us, resembling the Hotspur of the North, so far as being heard at each moment of intermission to cry out, "Fie upon this quiet life! I want work;" or like Dash, who exclaims,—

> "What a fine thing this term is!
> And what an ungodly time the long vacation!"

But, happily there are not wanting others to back us up and even fight them with their own weapons. "I wish you knew," says one of these friends in need, who is no less a personage, too, than Lacordaire; "I wish you knew how useful it is in life to lose our time occasionally. Look at Ozanam. What a difference if, instead of being in such haste to live as he was, he had only worked six hours in the day! He would have been alive now, and have had thirty years before him; but this comes of being in a hurry, and of opposing the distribution of things by

nature*." "We are entering on the spring," says another of whom he had been once the fervent disciple; "give yourself up to its happy influence, become a flower with the flowers. We lose through our own fault a part, and the greatest part of the benefits of the Creator. He surrounds us with His gifts; and, through I know not what sad obstinacy in tormenting ourselves, we refuse to enjoy them. Amidst an atmosphere of perfumes which emanate from Him, we make one for ourselves composed of all the mortal vapours which exhale from our cares, our disquietudes, and our sorrows. It is, as it were, a diving-bell, in which we isolate ourselves in the bosom of the immense ocean." I conclude from all this that, as the poet says, describing a summer ramble, it is madness not to wish occasionally to share the calm the season brings.

"Away! I will not be to-day
The only slave of toil and care,
Away, from desk and dust, away!
I'll be as idle as the air.

"For now a joy too deep for sound,
A peace no other season knows,
Hushes the heavens and maps the ground,
The blessing of supreme repose."

It is such lines as these that express our present impressions. If you come therefore to be merry with us, you are welcome; if you have any business, forget it; you forget where you are else.

That it is not, however, alone the doing nothing, or the having leisure in retreat, that nature requires at intervals, Balzac then proceeds to show, saying, "Solitude is certainly a fine thing; but there is a pleasure in having some one that can answer you when you say from time to time that it is a fine thing." It is all very well to sing verses to forests and rocks. Echoes teach nothing but what we had said to them first. As when Cowley's despairing lover exclaimed,

"———— Therefore I'll depart.
To which resounding echo answered, 'Part.'"

* Lettres de Lacordaire, 269.

This is what the poet verified in his sorrowful exile. "Here in Scythia," he says, "is no one to keep me company."

> "Non qui soletur, non qui labentia tarde
> Tempora narrando fallat, amicus adest *."

Yet he had literary resources enough in all conscience.

> "Detineo studiis animum, falloque dolores;
> Experior curis et dare verba meis †."

We need, therefore, during these intervals, what Cowper styles the employments of what is falsely called idleness—

> "Friends, books, a garden, and perhaps a pen."

Studious of such ease, that grave poet denies that he is slothful. And the Stoic of old would go further still; for Seneca says, "I recommend to you leisure, during which you would do greater and more beautiful things than when you were most occupied; for to be much in the forum, to keep knocking at the gates of great people is often, if you would but rightly estimate it, a very sordid kind of business ‡."

And here, as there is no one supposed to be present who is likely to love idleness in the sense of wasting time, knowing neither labour nor study, we may be permitted to continue a little longer, observing what can be said in favour of this legitimate and necessary use of leisure hours, of which the fruit, as Cicero says, is relaxation of mind. "I have often heard," he continues, "that when Lælius and Scipio used to go into the country, escaping from their labours in the city as from bondage, they would amuse themselves and play boys' parts incredibly well. I hardly dare to repeat of such men what Scævola relates of them, how they used to go picking up shells along the shore at Caieta, and descending to all sorts of frolic and recreation. For so nature requires; that as we see the birds at one time busily occupied in making nests for their young ones, but when they have made them, then, for the sake of relieving themselves after labour, flying about in every direction freely; so our minds, wearied with forensic affairs and city work, desire to escape and

* Ovid, Trist. † Ibid. ‡ Epist. 68.

fly about void of all care and occupation. In fact," he continues, "no one seems to me to be free who does not sometimes do nothing. I am constant in this opinion, that the very thing itself, doing nothing and altogether ceasing to act, can delight us*," as the poet would add,

> "While at our feet, the voice of crystal bubbles
> Charms us at once away from all our troubles;
> So that we feel uplifted from the world,
> Walking upon the white clouds wreath'd and curl'd."

Then elsewhere the Roman statesman says, "There should be a haven to which we could fly from time to time, not of sloth and laziness, but of moderate and honest leisure†. Philosophy itself," he continues, "will sometimes desire to call us back to where it began;" its work, as a later disciple says, is a simple and modest thing far removed from all parade and pretensions. "It will take rest," to resume the passage of Cicero, "in its gardens whenever it wishes, and where softly and delicately reclining, it calls us away from the rostra, from judgment, from courts, perhaps wisely, especially in the present state of public affairs. Nevertheless, let men who hear it, keep their secret as a certain mystery; for if no wise man were to take part in public affairs, as they pretend, they could not find for themselves what they so greatly desire—leisure." No one here, therefore, any more than Cicero, approves of such extravagance. It would never do, we are perfectly conscious, to invite all men into our brotherhood. We are only a few of this island, and we know well enough that if all were brained like us the state would totter; yet even few as we are, and uncharged with responsibility, we only stand up for idleness at intervals, such as M. Lepidus enjoyed, when one day lying on the grass while others were taking their exercise in the field, he said, alluding to his own position at the moment, "I wish this were working,—vellem hoc esset laborare," the wit of which saying seems to have greatly pleased the orator, who relates it among other instances of happy facetiousness. Play, such as we understand by the term, is the friend of man. "It stops," says an accomplished writer, "in their course

* De Oratore, vii. † Brutus, ii.

the fugitive years; it suspends the hour and makes us forget it; it is hope and good humour. It leaves to the mind a certain freedom, it leaves to chance its free will. Besides, play, on the river as elsewhere, is like a warfare drawing on those who engage in it, the combats, the chances, the unexpected defeats, or the unhoped-for victories of a struggle on the great scale."

What is required, in short, is the genial contentment of a serene hour, with all the things that it is supposed to involve according to the judgment of every common person of unsophisticated mind susceptible of human affections, constituting, if one may say so, a fleeting and a lasting pleasure; a momentary joy, but a joy also that will survive in the memory for ever—some of its elements being without a name—things which, however common and little in appearance, you will find to be very sweet when you come to taste them, causing you to feel as if, having tasted them, you had yourself been washed in the fountains of the Hours, which, according to some old poets, add grace and elegance to every thing that comes beneath their influence. The whole of course is, notwithstanding, a thing of little pretensions in a matter-of-fact point of view. In one sense at least it is only children's game, "a life," as our old dramatist says, "for sempstresses and scholars, the one stitching on clothes have nothing else to think on, the other picking fancies out of books, have little else to marvel at." A contemporary French writer, but not the author of an odious book under that title, calls some of these "the little pleasures of life,—les petits bonheurs;" who could enumerate them? a new bonnet, a fresh tie, an amusing book, a pleasant companion, a nice pair of oars; a million of things can yield them, and Fontenelle says of them, "people neglect or despise them, though they have not the same contempt for the little misfortunes of life. Let the thing at least be equal." Yes; felicity in this form is a thing of which we have all heard the name. We speak of it, we desire it, we seek it; alas! perhaps like some one near we remember it; and consequently, as Lacordaire says, "it is not a total stranger to us, neither is it always absent. When man fell, it followed him beyond the threshold of Eden; banished like ourselves it wanders with us through the world. It has not permission to show itself continuously; but it is not for-

bidden to it to choose an hour or two for giving itself to us. Then there is the joy for which the heart feels itself so profoundly adapted; for misery is the result of accident, whereas happiness is its nature and its predestination." These are what you might call ecstatic moments, when you feel a joy that renders you forgetful of time and of yourself. Lacordaire philosophizes on this fact, appealing to the common expression, 'the time passed like lightning;' or, as Shakspeare says,

"Pleasure and action make the hours seem short;"

and this then is what he qualifies as admirable; for it is, he says, as it were, a recognition of having beheld eternity, and of having been lost in the universal and true felicity of which even ordinary people can have a foretaste during these moments of rapturous contentment, however the cause may seem inadequate or even contemptible. For you see how little a thing serves on these occasions to produce this very effect.

Well, thus we play the fools by authority, with the time; and let us believe that the spirits of the wise sit in the clouds, and instead of mocking us, as Prince Henry suspected, smile; for to play the fool by authority is wisdom. St. Francis de Sales at least would lead us to think that they do so; for "when we were children," he says, "with what ardour used we to collect little pieces of tile or wood, or mud to make houses, and if any one knocked them over we should have been very sorry! At present indeed we know that all that fine affair was of very little consequence; and so it will be one day in heaven, when we shall see that our affections for the trifling things of this life, our holidays, and our merry-makings, were nothing but the freaks of childhood. Nevertheless," continues the saint, "let us have our freaks by all means, since we are children,—'faisons nos enfances, puisque nous sommes enfants,' only don't let us fret too much when our little designs are thwarted, and above all at dusk, that is, at death, when we shall have to leave our little constructions and take shelter in our Father's house, which indeed at no time do we exactly play with, though it serves us, at least every night, to better purpose than all our toys." Moreover, let us not believe, though Ariosto says it, that such hours are to be found among lost things in the moon, where he pre-

tends Astolfo found them; for there are very solid things to be derived from the kind of idleness that we are supposing. For instance, though we are rather premature in noticing it, "the rapidity with which modern people live," says a great observer, "hinders their seeing the depths of any thing, just as the enormous superficies over which their education strains to extend itself hinders their being well educated. Even in reading, men now-a-days will not stop to think; and they have too much to read to enable them to read twice. Thought is manifestly at a discount just now*." Petrarch must have had results of this kind in mind when he wrote his treatise "De otio Religiosorum," in which he developed the meaning of the sacred words, "vacate et videte." "The friends of this world," he said, "are so fain to be separated from its embraces, that nothing is more laborious to them than not to labour. For them," he continues, "I would have but one word—vacate. Rest, then, rest; be at leisure; be free; give yourself time to know what you are; to look about you, to consider what is above you; to rejoice, and in fine to be mindful of me with tears. O happy if you know yourselves thus, and how good it is to taste what you enjoy!" You perceive, therefore, that we are not feigning an evil, or the first to notice it. These intervals, then, during which life becomes so intellectual as we retire into ourselves, may constitute a sort of palliative for the epidemic; a realization even of what Gray desires for us all in the remarkable line—

"And leave us leisure to be good."

But on a future occasion we shall have to return to this subject, when among boats and swans and green rushes, thou shalt see what it is to "serve Plato," which saying, I must add, as there are ill-natured critics every where, is of course a figure of speech, and not a proposition to be literally interpreted. Let it suffice, however, for the present to understand that on the whole there is really something to be said in defence of the sort of idleness incident to these hours.

So much then for the general expediency of falling in with the views of leisure and repose here taken. To oppose them,

* F. Faber.

even waiving the last consideration, seems to argue an ambition of being wiser and stricter than the Ruler of mankind, to the disposition of whose providence it is conformable.

There are, as perhaps we all pretty well know from experience, hours of discouragement, of despondency, not without their use indeed, but still miserable hours, of cold sorrows, without a gleam of internal sunshine.

> "So much we feel our genial spirits droop,
> Our hopes all flat; nature within us seems
> In all her functions weary of herself."

But then, on the other hand, there are also hours of complacency, of love, of hope, of great thoughts, of good humour, of gratitude, of piety—serene hours. "I believe," says a French lively writer, "that all the world resembles me in relishing these rare and short instants when exterior things arrange themselves so as to leave us an absolute calm in regard to them. The least corner, whatever it be, decks itself then in our eyes with I know not what delightful charm, which is like feeling that we had possession of time, and of silence, and of ourselves." We are all like Menelaus in regard to both intervals, and can say with him,—

> *ἄλλοτε μέν τε γόῳ φρένα τέρπομαι, ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε παύομαι.*

In the ordinary course of human affairs, without our intending it, the smiles succeed providentially to the tears; for, as the French say, "Heur et malheur—c'est la vie humaine;" and referring to this vicissitude, uncorrupted nature seems to add—

> "When the sun shines let merry gnats make sport,
> But creep in crannies when he hides his beams."

Divine goodness thus ordains, as we hear in the song, "sunshine after rain." Richard of St. Victor, as if he had heard that very song, makes the same remark; and so general and useful does he esteem this order, that an interruption to it is represented by him as entering into the miseries that will announce the approach of the end of the world. "Rain," he says, "has the effect of dispelling the clouds and causing serenity. How

dreadful then must be the deluge of sorrows that will precede the end of the world, when we read that it will be clouds and darkness after rain! 'Antequam tenebrescat sol, et lumen, et luna, et stellæ—et revertantur nubes post pluviam.' Therefore is it said, 'Remember thy Creator before the clouds return after rain,—Memento Creatoris tui antequam revertantur nubes post pluviam*.'" We infer from all this that serene hours are a providential resource, and therefore not to be maligned. Of course, as I said from the first, we must expect notwithstanding plenty of abuse from some kind of people, in consequence of our avowing so crudely the scheme and purpose of our enterprise. The Jansenists, for instance, if any such should catch an inkling of our purpose, who think that all recreation is a mere device of corrupt nature to banish self-reflection, will not think very highly of it. Pascal says, "that man is so miserable, that when considered seriously, he is more to be pitied for being diverted by little things, than for being afflicted by great calamities, that his diversions are infinitely less rational than his ennui; and that his amusements have no other origin but his desire to avoid thinking of himself." But, as some one replied sensibly enough, as it appears to us, such a state as they oppose to our actual condition is impossible, and would be, if it were realized, ridiculous. Just fancy, for instance, one of Redknap's apprentices, instead of going to his work, and playing at intervals with a comrade, being taught to pass his time in contemplating himself, in considering his feet, or his hands, or his five senses, or his faculty of thinking!

Again, we should observe that the Christian Church in this, as indeed in every other respect in accordance with nature, not only recognizes the propriety and innocence of such intervals, not alone employs herself to make us internally qualified to taste their sweetness, but makes even express provision in an external material sense for our obtaining them. "Inde incipiendum est, unde a nemine dubitari potest," and there is nothing like saying it in Latin, as we have now to do with grave people. This one fact then ought to settle the question for ever, though in truth it had been determined from the beginning of

* Rich. S. Vict., de Mundi fine.

the human race; for under the first Dispensation, by the civil laws of the people of God, recreations, from time to time, and joyous holidays, were expressly ordered. Each week had its day of rest, each month its Neomenia, each year its three festivities, when all the community, parents and children, masters and servants, rich and poor, natives and strangers, were to be gay and joyful. They were all to rejoice, saith the text, the wife, and the son, and the daughter, the manservant and the maidservant, the Levite and the stranger, the orphan and the widow*.

> "If all the year were playing holydays,
> To sport would be as tedious as to work;
> But when they seldom come they wish'd for come."

Well said, Prince Henry! and, comrades, you will please to observe what were his notions of a holyday before, in some form or other, gloom had become by man's providence the order of every day. A holiday, no doubt, as the word however spelt implies, is a day to thank God for—a holy day set apart peculiarly to raise the soul to a union with Him, as the source of all that charity in which human happiness, as well as perfection, consists; but it also involves very often a material, and what some would now call vulgar and plebeian result, such, for instance, as a proclamation like Othello's to the Isle of Cyprus; and one can hardly help exclaiming, when one hears it, "Heaven bless the Isle of Cyprus!—for every man to put himself into triumph; some to dance, some to make bonfires; each man to what sport and revels his addiction leads him."

I prattle out of fashion, and dote in mine own comforts. Well, but what is to be said after all by sensible men against the old Christian fashion? It is objected that the interests of industry are involved in the question. But what sort of industry, I should like to know? Who speaks against industry? It is not we who advocate serene hours that do so. As poor Quicksilver the 'prentice says, though to be sure he was rather fast, "Well, we are good members of the city, if we were well considered." If we had now-a-days the judges of the Areopagus to punish

* Deut. xii. 16.—Lettres de quelques Juifs à M. de Voltaire, tom. iii. 107.

persons for idling without ostensible means of living; and if they should cite before them any of our excursionists as they sent for Menedemus and Asclepiades when they were young men and poor, asking them how they managed to look so sleek and smart when they spent the whole day conversing and "idling" with poets and philosophers, and had no property, I doubt not but that some of our young friends might reply like those youths, in spirit at least, desiring that some one of the miller's men, or some artisan or another, or some official that had people under him, had better be sent for; who, when he arrived, would say that they came every night to the mill and thrashed and ground the corn, and each earned two drachmæ. The Greek judges were so pleased that they presented the lads with 200 drachmæ as a reward *. Our people, after such a testimony in their favour from the head man of whatever kind of mill they frequent thus, are not likely to get much in that way, though it is not by night alone, but for six or seven whole days in the week that they are at work, for some four or five poor hours' respite that they may ask for. But this is all we want, and it fulfils our object. Ours are holidays after business. There could be no serene hours without the latter, as Prince Henry in the above passage very scientifically points out. But if you mean what Spenser calls a vain and idle industry—a tasteless, bodiless, or body-killing, soulless, and Godless industry, it is still true, remember, as in the days of Sallust, that the love of money, the need of luxury, and the thirst for such pleasures as belong to it, are not precisely the most promising signs of the health and increasing greatness of a nation. "The passions connected with the utilities of property," says a great author, "become morbidly strong; and a mean lust of accumulation merely for the sake of accumulation, or even of labour merely for the sake of labour, will banish at last the serenity and the morality of life as completely, and perhaps more ignobly, than the lightness of pleasure †." The Père Boutauld had remarked all this before him: "An excess of affection or application," said he, "to any enterprise, however laudable, is no less dangerous than any other kind of dis-

* Athen. iv. † Ruskin.

quietude. All this violence in our heart has but one direction—towards death. Nothing is immortal and glorious but what is serene*."

But some persons tell you, that you have to make your fortune and push your way in the world, and therefore that there must be no respite. Likely enough. As the old Roman said, "Nos sumus, apud quos usque eo nihil ante mortem otiosum est, ut, si res potitur, non sit ipsa mors otiosa." "Let me tell you, scholar," says Walton, "I have a rich neighbour that is always so busy, that he has no leisure to laugh; the whole business of his life is to get money and more money, that he may still get more and more money; he is still drudging on, and says that 'the diligent hand maketh rich;' and it is true indeed; but he considers not that 'tis not in the power of riches to make a man happy."

"Quid brevi fortes jaculamur ævo
Multa? quid terras alio calentes
Sole mutamus? patriæ quis exul
Se quoque fugit†?"

It is not possible to forget the instance of Pyrrhus, who proposing different conquests in reply to the philosopher's reiterated "And then?" said that he would make merry; when he received for answer, "What hinders you from doing that now?" At all events, as our old dramatist says,

"Who may not play one day in a week,
May think his thrift far to seek."

Let me tell you, for all they say, that it is well, like honest Walton, "to do nothing at times but rejoice, and sit quietly and free from cares under a willow. No life," he says, "so happy and so pleasant as the life of a well-governed river-lover; for when the lawyer is swallowed up with business, and the statesman is preventing or contriving plots, then we sit on cowslip-banks, hear the birds sing, and possess ourselves in as much quietness as these silent silver streams, which we now see glide so quietly by us." Possibly, though this is any thing but certain, men may lose some results that occasionally attend an in-

* Les Conseils de la Sagesse, 102. † Hor. ii.

ordinate industry by preserving a taste for serene hours. What then? In this world we must always lose in gaining, part with something to acquire something else; but what is your loss in this instance, and what your gain? Is any thing of value lost if it could never have been used or enjoyed? No one should disparage business; but if you will give it an exclusive and undue importance, you drive us to remind you of the experience and the lines of Cowley:

> "Thou wouldst, forsooth! be something in a state,
> And bus'ness thou wouldst find, and wouldst create:
> Business! the frivolous pretence
> Of human lusts, to shake off innocence;
> Business! the grave impertinence;
> Business! the thing which I of all things hate;
> Business! the contradiction of thy fate."

Your gain by discarding such notions is the ability to use and to enjoy what partly is of earth in a way compatible with the everlasting and unmixed gain of heaven. This aggregate of gain the Christian Church, as well as reason, permits; for she only prays that we may so pass through temporal goods as not to lose eternal. The idea of this gain is accepted by the holy as typical of that which is for ever. "How will they not rejoice in their own country," exclaims Richard of St. Victor, "who can thus exult in a foreign land? What joy will they not have at home who can be so exhilarated in banishment*?" This gain involves that sort of calm which, as was said of a great poet, when once achieved lasts for ever. In fact, to have a taste for serene hours is to have a taste for heaven; and this is so true that we find some distinguished men, among whom, unfortunately, Montesquieu even may be reckoned †, disrelishing the idea of the latter on this very ground; for the thought of this calm and serenity lasting for ever in the durability of the future state is actually a fresh offence to some self-tormented advocates of "progress," who find the immutability of the promised beatitude of heaven as objectionable as the duration of punishment for the guilty, the need of an eternal rest being thought

* In Ps. cxvii. † Pensées diverses.

by them contrary to the essential activity of human nature: but it can hardly be expected of us that we should be swayed by what the new partisans of the metempsychosis may choose to affirm in defiance of experience, and of the very observation of nature that is pretended, which in spite of their assertions does always aspire amidst its greatest activity to the realization of an ultimate and eternal rest. De Quincey saw further than these people when he spoke of "a tranquillity that was no product of inertia, but as if resulting from infinite activities and infinite repose." The objections of men who seem to find in action only the interest of action itself, are not worth being taken into account, unless it be, indeed, on a very raw day in February, and certainly are inadequate to furnish an argument in spring or summer time against the general object that is here kept in view. They, at least, of the race of Sem, content if they have only a song and a pleasant companion, when hearing of the censures passed upon them by the sons of Japhet (audax Japeti genus), wanting always to labour and to change without profit, will ask permission to lament that any mortal should be capable of so mistrusting the resources of infinite love and wisdom as to turn aside from the great oracles of truth, and by that very act lose the sentiment of human things while fancying that the peace of heaven must be a lethargic immobility. "They have reason to fear," says a recent author, "lest the activity which they insist upon may be granted them one day and for ever in that impassable circle of illusions, of sterile efforts, and of painful obstinacy, which the periodical evolutions of error in this world figure and presage*." In short, the intervals of serenity that we invoke seem to involve nothing but a disposition recommended, if we may venture to allude to such a thing in passing, on divine authority; for if in general we are to esteem the malice of each day sufficient for itself, can there be disaccordance with that charge and latent evil in an innocent fulfilment of the lines?—

> "Dona præsentis rape lætus horæ, ac
> Linque severa†.
> —— carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero."

* L. Moreau, la Destinée de l'Homme, liv. i. † Hor. Od. vii. 3.

What else does Euripides recommend when saying, "There are innumerable hopes to innumerable men; but I call him happy whose life is happy day by day?" Why be always in such a hurry to anticipate the future, as if saying, like Lamennais, "we are at to-morrow?" Let us repeat, then, our angler's song, and say,—

"Come, serene looks,
Clear as the crystal brooks,
Or the pure azured heaven, that smiles to see
The rich attendance on our poverty;
Peace and a secure mind,
Which all men seek, we only find."

If you think all this mere trifling, remember what a wise writer says: "There is nothing so delicate nor so fragile as a happy state. We should fear," continues Fontenelle, "to touch it, even under pretence of amelioration."

But it is not alone that nature and Christianity are in accordance when a favourable judgment is invoked for such intervals as we are about to enjoy: there remains for us a consideration, taking as yet only a general view, of the excellent fruits of a positive kind which almost in a visible manner result from them.

The grave Tacitus relates of our poor barbarous ancestors, that for the most part they used to consult together in convivial meetings, as if at no other time the mind was more open to simple thoughts or more enthusiastically devoted to great things,—a race not cunning or astute was accustomed to open thus the secrets of its heart amidst the licence of joking—the minds of all were then naked and laid bare, so they deliberated when they could feign nothing,—"Plerumque in conviviis consultant; tamquam nullo magis tempore aut ad simplices cogitationes pateat animus, aut ad magnas incalescat gens non astuta nec callida; aperit adhuc secreta pectoris licentia joci; ergo detecta et nuda omnium mens; deliberant dum fingere nesciunt."

I confess, for my part, that I prefer this simple record of a national feeling to the celebrated and often-praised sentence of the same historian, when after mentioning that our ancestors of this island, under the influence of that great man Agricola, began to adopt the custom of having arcades to walk in, baths

to swim in, and a more elegant style of meeting together for mutual festivity, he proceeds to stigmatize these signs of progress as "delinimenta vitiorum," and to say that what the ignorant called humanity was only a part of servitude. He wrote at a time when it was allowable and laudable to be out of humour with every thing that emanated from his own government; but it does not seem to follow as an inevitable logical inference that the Britons would have been wiser or happier if they had adopted nothing from Roman usages, or that they were not right in turning to profit what was good in the civilization of their conquerors. Be that, however, as it may, the old original Germanic thought, like a very obstinate thing, continues to leave traces among their descendants to the present hour, when unquestionably the amenities of art are found to be with many compatible with the absence of vices, and humanity with freedom.

Yes, truly, the heart—supposing a person to have one at all—is opened in serene hours; and, as some one says, it is the heart that gives the subject for the head to think upon, so that the river or the garden is just the place for us to select for our proposed conferences. The younger Pliny, you know, writes a long letter to his friend Gallus to describe the agreeableness of his villa; "but permit me," says an English writer, in like manner, "to show what I have contrived in a northern climate. It is only a small sheltered spot; but I never enter this delicious retirement without feeling my spirits revived, and a sweet complacency diffused over my whole mind. The music of waters, the symphony of birds, the gentle humming of bees, the breath of flowers, the fine imagery of painting and sculpture, in a word, the charms of nature and art court all my faculties, refresh the fibres of the brain, and smooth every avenue of thought. What agreeable wanderings of the mind have I enjoyed here! And when I turn up some masterly writer, methinks here his beauties appear in the most advantageous light. Every one here is in good humour. There is a lute in the grotto, there is singing on the grass-plat; here we dine, drink tea, dance, and what is the chief pleasure of all, see our neighbours happy." It will seem to many that he might well say all this; for in fact in such places and hours you

feel as if you were at peace with all the world, which is one step, at all events, towards your being so also with yourself; and without such peace there can be no great intellectual enjoyment, I suppose, any where. Then how ready you are in a charitable mood to discuss men and things! How ardent you are to conceive and realize great and generous matters; even as Chaucer says, to think devotion! Would it not, then, be often well for us if we could only persevere, after those moments are past, to think and act according to the impressions we received while they lasted? The development of this theme will occupy us later on many of our excursions. For when we shall behold and feel the beautiful sun of a May morning, or the serener glories of an autumnal setting, you must allow us to row this way and that, and even leaving our boat in some creek, to beat the country a little, to stop in many a thicket, and to gather the wild flowers along the path. At present, however, as I said, we can only cast a slight general glance at the collective advantages which may be derived from such rambles.

In the first place, intervals of this kind, as we have already casually suggested, seem ordained as a needful remedy for the sadness which, though we had never read René or Childe Harold, is incident to our nature. The poet in his banishment complains of being deprived of serene hours at a period of life when he stood in greatest need of them,—

> "Nunc erat, ut posito deberem fine laborum
> Vivere, me nullo sollicitante metu:
> Quæque meæ semper placuerunt otia menti,
> Carpere, et in studiis molliter esse meis."

Natural and—in the absence of higher views, which will sometimes be for moments eclipsed—excusable are such complaints in any age, seeing how stript and withered life itself generally becomes in its progress towards the common bourne.

> "Singula de nobis anni prædantur euntes."

He who can look back, indeed, upon some morning or evening when he enjoyed, with a friend of his heart, serene hours, finds a sort of pleasure in thinking of them, the chief pleasure of the present then consisting in its awakening a recollection of the

past, if it be not more correct to say, his hopes of heaven, where all things good and happy will be found again. But in some form or other, as we have just remarked, to a certain extent even these smiling intervals do, in point of fact, return here below as if by a providential law to most of us; and who will not perceive the advantage arising from them? the utility even in the highest spiritual sense? Do you see yon fellow so sad—he neither sings nor whistles? There is a whole generation of such now. Where is not to be found, for instance, the man whose discontents seem unremoveably coupled to nature, impressed, perhaps, even with a sense of the monotony of life itself? We have found him as melancholy as a lodge in a warren. Well, he is prevailed upon some fine day to try this unpretending specific, understanding, of course, always, that it is used in subordination to other and higher remedies, which it is not always just the thing to talk about. There is another to be met with, amorous of joy, who says with poor Eugenia in the old play,

> "——— I have not smiled
> These ten months; if a sigh will please you,
> I can afford enough to break your heart."

She, too, is at length taken on the river, or to the garden; any thing is better than a morbid pining over irrecoverable or hopeless things. So she hears some one saying,

> "——— Go, I pray you;
> Walk, and be cheerful once again."

Virtue, it may be supposed, will not lament, though she should witness a recovery in such instances like that of the niece in the comedy, whose malignant sulkiness is cured, her mental restoration being described in these terms:—

> "Melancholy! she's o' th' other side now;
> Extremely merry, dance and song, all air."

Perhaps she is blamed now on a new score; but for a few moments, at least, as far as the original malady is concerned, so complete is the cure effected, that all her reply will be to the same purpose, saying with the former convalescent,

"Uncle,
You are not merry; I pray, laugh a little."

The truth is, as old poets say, in their unguarded style, but not the less justly in one sense,

"——— joy's a subtil elf;
I think man's happiest when he forgets himself.
Once dry, now holy-water'd mead,
Our hearts wear feathers, that before wore lead."

The air of the cheerful place, moreover, follows one home, and we see plainly that the host, of whom a pleasant anecdote is related, was in the right in charging for it in his bill. "Theodore and I," says a French author, "went to refresh ourselves at a little wayside inn, and drank four pints between us. When the time came to pay, 'You owe me for six pints,' said our friendly landlord; and when we reminded him that he counted two more than we had taken, 'I know what I am about, gentlemen,' said he; 'four pints drank, and two pints carried away in your exhilarated spirits, make six pints, or I don't know myself.'" But this, of course, is only the gross representative of the thing implied. But, happy poets! happy philosophers! happy holiday folk! who consume and carry away with them what is better than that which mine host contemplated! There are in the world lads and lasses that stand in great need of incurring expense on this score, and of real refreshment. If you would do them good, you must subject them to a little airy enchantment. All through these rambles I shall be supposing some such magic at work; and, as Prospero says,—

"I must bestow upon the eyes of each young couple some vanity of mine art;
It is my promise, and they expect it from me."

I hope that each of us will be able to say with a celebrated author, who had often felt and described such moments, "It is as if a benevolent fairy had passed her hand over the agitations of my heart. I breathe, I live, I think, and all this sweet repose that I feel is owing to my having given myself up yesterday to the charm of serene hours; it is because I was not a pedantic

sophist, neither a man of affairs nor a philosopher." Come on, then! Let us have intervals like these, and become happy for a day!

All this, however, if the truth must be known, involves nothing but a very ancient receipt, a mere empirical specific. Without going to a magician, every schoolboy has heard it.

> "Misce stultitiam consiliis brevem:
> Dulce est desipere in loco."

There is no use either, that one can see, in trying to exclude any one from the benefit. The old Greek poet represents women as lamenting that they are deprived of such things through the prejudice of the age, that would confine them even from the open air. "There is not," they say, "so great a labour to young men as to us women with a tender soul. For to them there are equals in age, to whom they tell their anguish of cares with confidence; and they attend to pastimes that soothe them; and they wander in the streets, lounging amongst coloured pictures. But we are wasted away with dark thoughts." Let Aunt Pedigree grumble as she will, it shall not be our fault if this pagan state of things continues.

But without expecting prodigies, how many conditions of mind are there for which nothing is more medicinal than a change, an interruption to the current of its thoughts, simply by means of the interposition of a new scene, and what we call a serene hour? which is not to be confounded with that frequent migration to places far distant, and that restless mutation of residence which the ancients, before railroads were thought of, deemed injurious and indicative of instability of character*; for it is so far from being identical with this propensity, that it even generally extinguishes it altogether, a trip of a few miles on an afternoon serving, to all intents and purposes, as well as a journey of six months to the world's end to fetch a tooth-picker from the farthest inch of Asia—or rather indeed serving a much better purpose. Henry Stephens says, "I have been ill with that kind of sickness of which physicians make no mention, of a disgust for my accustomed actions, which obliges me to try

* Seneca, Epist. 69.

my appetite for something else, like those who are tired of their usual food." I suppose it will be allowed that, as already suggested, we are all more or less subject to the influence of such intervals. Coming as they do without our courting them or deriving them from any calamity, they seem to announce sometimes that we are to be for ever disconsolate. Jules Janin thinks them a characteristic of our times. "Unhappy generation!" he exclaims, humorously, "they do not know any longer how to laugh, how to spend a merry holiday, miserable victims of civilization, dumb, prudent, lethargic, formal, ready any day to hang themselves to the trees, or to throw themselves into the river, or, worse still, to publish a thousand and one varieties of poetic meditations." But, for Englishmen at least, a holiday may change all. For as in the forest, so is it in the society of men—

> "A tree that bears a ragged, unleaf'd top
> In depth of winter, may, when summer comes,
> Speak, by his fruit, he is not dead but youthful
> Though once he show'd no sap. The heart's a plant
> Kept down by colder thoughts, and doubtful fears;
> Time's frowns, like winter storms, make it seem dead,
> But yet it is not so; make it serene,
> And you shall see it spring, and shoot forth leaves
> Worthy your eye, and the oppressed sap
> Ascend to every part to make it green,
> And put forth leaves and fruit *."

But it is not only sadness that a holiday can cure. You who are out of humour with all the world from having been roughly handled in some way or other, may have your muscles relaxed and your heart opened by means of its benign influence. To-day you may think yourself a very ill-used individual (perhaps it is, "entre nous," reader, because some silly person has not returned his visit), you may be recalling a formidable list of wrongs full of suitable sentiments towards this person or that. Even the Muses are wont, as Euripides says, "to make strife between two joint composers of a hymn." To-day, of course, like another Achilles, you owe it to yourself to be dignified; and as some one says in the old play—

* Shirley.

"———— I know thou hadst rather
Follow thine enemy in a fiery gulf
Than flatter him in a bower;"

but to-morrow, a pull up the river, a few songs, the clear, bright air, a stroll through the garden, may change all that heroic disposition—

"J'ai ri, me voilà désarmé."

Balzac was accused of vanity for having said that he had found what some were looking for, meaning some little art in the arrangement of words. For this he was calumniated and most harshly criticized. He defended himself at first stoutly and warmly enough; but at last, having been tempted to try this simple kind of remedy, he ended by showing what a few serene hours had taught him, saying, "If my enemies are not contented with all these excuses and explanations, I am quite ready now to give them entire satisfaction." If some are still angry at his having said that he had found what some are seeking, he consents with all his heart to have this unfortunate sentence effaced from his book, and that instead of it should be read that he sought what they had found.

Antiquity at one time seemed on the point of deifying pacific influences. In fables Jupiter is called the serene as well as the thunderer and cloud-compeller. But it is no fable which tells us that the more gentle man becomes, the nearer he approaches to the original type and object of his creation. Now experience proves that a few hours of exterior and internal serenity conduce admirably to this end. Johnson, accordingly, whom one is always glad to have on one's side, recognizes the value of those soft intervals of unbended amusement in which a man shrinks to his natural dimensions, and throws aside the ornaments or disguises which he feels in privacy to be useless incumbrances. When some one praised the indefatigable industry of Cromwell, Cowley, in his celebrated Discourse, replied, "If I were his son, I should wish to God he had been a more lazy person, and that we might have found him sleeping at the hour when other men are ordinarily waking, rather than waking, for those ends of his, when other men were ordinarily asleep." How well would it be for many to idle on the river with us

rather than have their poor feet so tired with running to and fro, making such haste, searching out, accomplishing such a diligent search, and all, very often at the best, for no other reason but that they must have no cessation of toil. "Oh, how much better," exclaims Philippe de Commynes, "speaking naturally," he adds, "as a man who has no literature but only some little experience—oh, how much better would it have been for this king and for all other princes, and men of the middle class who lived under them, to have chosen the mean road, that is to say, to have laboured less, and troubled themselves less, and undertaken less, and feared more to offend God by injuring their neighbours, and instead of acting as they do, to have taken their ease and enjoyed themselves with common honest pleasures! Their lives would have been longer, maladies would have come later, and their deaths would have been more regretted, and by more people, and they would have had less reason to fear death." So speaks the chamberlain grown old in the palaces of princes, who has assisted during long years at their sleepless nights and their agitated dreams, and who from their youth to their death has not detected in their envied destinies a single happy day*. Cardan, getting the start of Jules Janin, has even the courage in his quaint way to name one by one the kind of common pleasures which confer that happiness which, as he truly remarks, all the riches and honours of Seneca, Acilius, and Augustus are incompetent to yield. To hear him you would suppose that he belonged to our Thames confraternity. These pleasures are, he says, "rest, tranquillity, modesty, temperance, order, change of scene, mirth, sunny smiling things, society, sleep, food, drink, riding, boating, taking walks, examining new things, meditation, contemplation, piety, taking refreshment with companions, recalling what was well in the past, cleanliness, water and fire, hearing music, letting your eyes wander, chatting, telling stories, freedom, good behaviour, watching little birds, puppy dogs, cats, consolation in death, sharing the common lot of others, hoping against hope, exercising some art in which you are skilled, being at some sunny spot such as can be found in the south of Italy, or Sicily, or in Thessaly,"—or on the

* Sainte-Beuve, Causeries du Lundi, i.

Thames, he would have added, had he known it,—"though this," he says in conclusion, "is not of so much consequence; for it is men who make places happy, not places men*."

Moreover, love and friendship seem to require these intervals; for "that man," as Johnson truly says, "will not be long agreeable whom we see only in times of seriousness and severity; and therefore, to maintain the softness and serenity of benevolence, friends should partake of each other's pleasures as well as cares, and be led to the same diversions by similitude of taste." Without a little love and joking, some one says, there is nothing agreeable; even the memory of having with some one whiled away an hour or two pleasantly and innocently creates a certain natural bond of affection; so that the poet, complaining of a certain friend for having violated faith, alludes to his having been formerly so often associated with him in parties of pleasure as immensely aggravating the crime—

> "Quid si duntaxat Romæ mihi cognitus esses,
> Adscitus toties in genus omne joci†?"

Moreover, among excellent results of such excursions we should remark that almost inevitable interchange of qualities which arises out of them, when persons of different turns of mind and manner and occupations, and even perhaps, in some auspicious moments, of rank, are brought into close contact with each other. In Lilly's Campaspe there is a dialogue which will explain what I mean; for on application being made to the chief of the party, as it were, in the words, "Wouldst thou entertain any of us two?" or, in other words, "Will you take us with you?" he replies, "Upon condition." And on being pressed to state it, he replies, "That you should tell me wherefore any of you both were good." One of the candidates then says, "Why, I am a scholar, and well seen in philosophy;" the other answering for himself in these terms, "And I a 'prentice, and well seen in painting," when the captain decides to take them both, on condition of each borrowing something from the other that he himself wanted, saying, "Well then, scholar, be thou a painter to amend thine ill face; and thou, 'prentice, a philosopher, to cor-

* De Vita propria, cap. xxxi. † Ovid, Trist.

rect thy evil manners." Now, such are, in point of fact, some of the good consequences which follow from our simply going out for the day or evening, in this free and easy manner, with a set of young people, that become dear to us as brothers and sisters. More or less we imitate, and so correct and amend one another.

In fine, we shall find proof all through the following rambles that this sort of enjoyment involves and requires virtues, even high graces, under whatever name they may pass on the river, and therefore of its utility, in the best sense of the term, no one with the longest beard can reasonably entertain a doubt. We shall discover that what nearly all of us at some time or other set our hearts upon, a going out for the day, to have, as it were, a pleasant holiday and some right merry laughing, is really and practically more in reach of those who act properly and follow good than of any other class of mortals, though light as butterflies and decked as bright. This kind of enjoyment is offered by nature, and that too, as we have seen, with the sanction of an authority which solves such of its enigmas as concern us,—freely to persons of all conditions as one of the appanages of the human race. For the moment it makes us feel happy; and, as Alfred de Musset says, enforcing a precept already heard, we should take great care of our happiness, however little it may be, and use great caution lest we should compromise by seeking to increase it. The heart has nothing infinite but desire; therefore, in every thing of this kind, it is well to stop half-way, and be content with the smallest possible realities. An interval of this kind cannot perhaps be made much of in a grave oration; but it counts for a great deal secretly and silently with the heart; and though ambition, and avarice, and dull formality, and the utilitarian prose of life turn away disdainfully, take the word of honest people for it that it shows marvellously well in its effects; for, as our Cowper says,—

> "Those Christians best deserve the name
> Who studiously make peace their aim;
> Peace, both the duty and the prize
> Of him that creeps and him that flies."

A taste for such pleasures, however some faulty ones like a

certain individual not to be named may have a hankering for them, seems in general to belong to persons fashioned in the best proportions and after the most noble models, whose souls are gay and minds right, characters just and wise, affable and good-humoured, playful, infantine, and yet firm and energetic, serene intelligences, knowing how to escape from sadness, from ambition, from envy, full of regards for occasion, of indulgence for necessities, equitable, free, and of ways that please every one; like Gay, of whom Pope so beautifully says—

> "Of manners gentle, of affections mild;
> In wit a man, simplicity a child;
> Above temptation in a low estate,
> And uncorrupted ev'n among the great;
> A safe companion, and an easy friend,
> Unblamed thro' life, lamented in his end."

What a pleasant thing is it to behold a René d'Anjou enjoying his serene hour, even when imprisoned in the tower of Bar, to which he had returned of his own accord, in accordance with his promise; which act, by the way, was said at the time by sensible people to have been one of stupid folly! How many would have deemed it difficult to realize such a project, since he had no other provision or apparatus for it but a new landscape, representing the Castle of Tarascon, which had been sent to beguile his captivity by Isabella of Lorraine! This, however, proved enough for him. It is more, of course, in our present line to observe him in happier times, directing his promenades by water from Angers to his favourite manor, named Reculée, embarking in the little boat of a fisherman, with whom he loved to chat, while going to amuse himself, for whole days together, in his garden and with his pictures, or to see him enjoying himself, with a perfect passion for such serenity, in his country villa near Aix in Provence, which was on the rivulet called the Arc*. Is it not pleasant to meet with people in high positions, possessing such a character? or to find a person of any condition resembling André Chénier,—"a man of noble elevation and energy, yet in general liking a society of intimate friends, a tender and loving state of reverie, sunny spots with meditation,

* De Villeneuve Bargemont, Hist. de René d'Anjou, tom. ii. 95.

where he could 'make his hive full of a poetic honey?'" or a man like our late venerable poet, to whom a correspondent can say, "How I envy you that wondrous resiliency of spirits and ever-greenery of mind!"

"This friend of ours," writes Balzac, furnishing us with another instance, "is rich after a way of his own, with the public riches, with innocent riches. The morning, the evening, and the beautiful hours of the day are his. As the sun gives him liberally the sole thing he desires of it, he is grateful and thinks that nothing can exceed his obligation for the gift of that light which enters into his soul with joy. He considers all gold and diamonds as only so much rubbish. Of course, such a philosophy would not be relished by many; but men of business have their opinions, and he has his." Yet whatever may be thought on 'Change, or in the halls of some magnates, there is reality in what he possesses. And then with what facility and sweetness does this true and large fundholder, man of immense landed property — including, without legal fiction, all the air above it to the zenith—acquire and enjoy his wealth! "Most things pursued by men for the happiness of private life, our wit and folly have so refined," as Swift, speaking of conversation, says, "that they seldom subsist but in idea. They require so many ingredients, so good in their several kinds, and so much niceness in mixing them, that a man may spend his life without realizing them. But in obtaining serene hours, it is or might be otherwise; for here we have only to avoid a multitude of errors, which may be in every man's power. Therefore it seemeth to me, that the truest way to understand this art, is to know the faults and errors to which it is subject; because it requireth few talents to which most men are not born, or at least may not acquire without any great genius or study. For nature hath left every man a capacity for enjoying such intervals; though there are thousands of men who, by a very few faults that they might correct in half a day, cannot so much as guess what serene hours mean*." Were all persons thus taught, in a quiet, rational way, then would follow good manners in youth, and moderation, and charity, and religion, and peace, and what the

* Swift.

poet, without knowing the extent of what he aspired after, invoked for his country, all grace and honour—"et decus omne."

But stop a moment longer; it is well in concluding this general survey of our subject, and before taking to our oars again, to notice the comparative inviolability of the whole domain, and the sort of exemption which it seems to enjoy from the contrasts and vicissitudes of opinion and of feeling elsewhere observable. Having ever thought that "it might bless the world with benefits unknowingly," I fear we may be led on here to speak somewhat too rhetorically, and to exaggerate certain advantages with a sense of which we are impressed; for I feel rising to my lips the expression of Dante, though he was speaking, it must be confessed, of somewhat a higher group when he calls it "la bella scuola;" and yet here, too, is a school, to which, as one whom I venture to call my friend observes, youth calls youth, serenity serenity, forming a whole nation, as if there were no other in the world. Here, to repeat his words, when you see one of its natives embarking, the other will be found to follow. You see them all running to join in the festival, which seems to be opened every where; it is within and without, on the river, on the banks, in the house, in the garden, under the trees, and on the sunny slope. Each comes with his offering; each brings with him what he has in his heart; this one his poetic imagination, that one his quick intelligence; this one his smile, that one his good-natured noise. There seems to be but one heart and one soul in all of them. All jealousy is extinguished, all rivality forgotten, all distinction of rank, of fortune, of honours, of power, of talents, left at home, as so many vile mercenaries that will be found again on the return. It is like suspension of arms of all little mean passions, a truce with ambition, pride, and intellectual superiority—one might call it the truce of God—and all this the work of an evening on the Thames. This is no doubt the bright side of the medal, the ideal of the thing. You may think it exaggerated. And yet, while claiming for what we are concerned with only a very humble place among the expedients for promoting human happiness, one may hazard a few more propositions in its favour which seem by no means fanciful or visionary. What Crashaw, for instance, wishes for his friend,—

> "Soft silken hours,
> Open scenes, shady bowers;
> 'Bove all nothing within that lowers,"

humble as it may be, involves an unquestionable good, which, indeed, the very words express. And then, it may be justly suggested, that in the absence of conflicting interests, as on occasions of this kind, unsophisticated hearts, and the great primitive traditions of the human race, are pretty much the same in all ages, and that simple natures, untampered with, as we suppose them here to be, with persons of mild and sweet and peaceable spirits, as not alone most anglers, according to Walton, but most river-loving people are, will, in some very important points, ever resemble each other. When sick of the turmoil of passions elsewhere, the wish to fly to these natures or these traditions, and to have good thoughts possess us, might be expressed, I think, in words like those of Elizabeth, queen of the fourth Edward, "Come, come, my boy, we will to sanctuary; world, farewell!" There are, indeed, hearts and natures of another kind.

> "Le ciel veut qu'ici-bas chacun ait ses fâcheux,
> Et les hommes seraient sans cela trop heureux.
> Ah! marquis, que l'on voit de fâcheux tous les jours
> Venir de nos plaisirs interrompre le cours!"

But here, by the very constitution of the thing, these sort of characters are excluded, and it is "all serene," I promise you. Indeed, this is so true, that the witty poet, when seeking an image to express his own security from the ignoble vulgar, has recourse to it for that purpose, saying,

> "Safe within my little wherry,
> All their madness makes me merry;
> Like the waterman on Thames,
> I row by and call them names *."

Here, without leaving the world, which but a few, I suppose, are called to decide on, we escape for some hours at least from Vanity Fair, and from the miseries of those remaining in it, such as are so well described by one who has lately chosen it for

* Swift.

his theme. Here, too, though we do not meet together after the approved fashion of your select club, which consists, according to a keen observer, in obtaining good cooking, and enjoying the advantages both of home and of business, without the ties of either *, is what may be called a circle of nature's own forming. Here, the soft wings of peace covering it round, is a sort of society, enjoying "ample interchange of sweet discourse," as Stanley says to Richmond, charming society, that long-sundered friends look back on, like that which, in former times, in France, was content with being spectators and hearers of things, without ambition, full of observation without envy, fond of leisure and attentive, disinterested and feeling an interest in every thing, true lovers of whatever is beautiful, having, as Joubert used to say, "hospitable hearts and minds," in which the opinions of friends can be admitted, and find a lodging for a night or so; unlike those who have no rooms in their understandings for receiving any thing from without. Here are minds desiring, one may believe, in a general way, to do good when they get home again, but as a philosopher said of himself, not desiring to make a noise when doing it; because they perceive that noise does no good, and that good makes no noise. Here are influences favourable to the culture of such characters as even the Duc de Saint-Simon loves to find in the galleries of Versailles. "A companion-like disposition without formality, gentle, gracious, affable, with that quality which his countrymen call *gaillard;* fond of fun, but of that fine kind of pleasantry which never offends; ready to fall in with the tastes and views of others; able to speak a whole day without a breach of kindness towards any one, present or absent; an easy manner; every thing to every one, with a capacity for sweetening and giving a cheerful tone to the most serious and thorny affairs, without its appearing to cost one any thing." Here one is prompted to think, if not to say, like Petrarch, "What can be happier than to see friends so united, as if with only one soul and one will? Is there any thing more agreeable than foreheads ever serene, minds ever in accordance, hearts ever open? What is sweeter than conversation in which truth reigns without restraint, without reserve,

* Leigh Hunt, "A Saunter through the West End."

and without pedantry *?" Here, as the old poet says of his own countrymen in the days of their happiness, "we have no thoughts how we should deliver a speech rightly, nor how we should calumniate any one ingeniously; but who should be the best oarsman †." What a contrast here, O ye democrats and politicians, to the atmosphere that encompasses you, which is breathed by millions of people, who make it for themselves expressly like your continental revolutionists, whose disordered intelligence is so often served by a devouring activity! Marat said that during three years he had not taken a quarter of an hour's recreation. Of course, to human eyes, the wretch was past cure by the specific, but others less execrable may be believed on their word, when they say as much of themselves. Yet we are neither slaves nor time-servers, for here may be often verified the words of Vauvenargues, that "great thoughts come from the heart," and truly "the heart's all." Accordingly, the Duc de Saint-Simon, in describing the admirable character of the Dauphin, remarks that his amiable and noble qualities "were most apparent during his promenades ‡:" "c'étoit là où ses qualités paroissoient le plus." Here hearts, as the ancient Germans said, are opened, dilated, and the generous thoughts of simple minds interchanged. For we also have a muse which dwelleth with us for the sake of teaching somewhat. Unlike the phantom that presides in secret societies of either ancient or modern times, this muse of ours leaves to every class of the nation its rights, to all legitimate authorities their proper influence, and to all parts of the community their peculiar character and life. We burn with no black secrets which can make us dear to pale conspirators. Whoever is fatigued with the news of political violence, social catastrophes, and the turmoil of the world, seeking change, and the overthrow of what is great and good, should come here to find a security and peace, which in a great measure are beyond the reach of outrage. Here we learn, too, how friends are made and how they are preserved. "The promenades of the Dauphin," says the Duc de Saint-Simon, "which, though for pleasure and recreation, he made conducive to his own instruction, conversing on all sorts of subjects, gained him many friends,

* Epist. v. 21. † The Wasps. ‡ Tom. x. 113.

won for him the hearts and admiration of those who accompanied him *."

The Père Boutauld even expressly says that it is during play-time people can best discern the excellent and noble qualities of soul which you may possess, and that it is then these qualities have most power over the wills of others †. Indeed, though we should be far from wishing to turn them to this account, it is on occasions of this kind that the characters of men and women are drawn out, and that others can judge best what they really are. Mazarin, reflecting on the injustice with which the family of Courtenay, that branch of the royal house of France legitimately descended from Louis le Gros, had been always treated, was anxious to discover what could be made of the young Prince de Courtenay, who was in his twentieth year, and what he was fit for. In order to ascertain this point, he thought no expedient better than to take him along with him on his excursion from Paris to Saint Jean de Luz, as it was a journey to be made at leisure and of easy stages. The result was that the cardinal despaired of being able to serve him, or to make any thing of him. But, as I said, we are not for recommending these intervals on this score, though I must take occasion to remark that they belong to men who are loyal and true —free from the whole train of ugly vices which attend the betting mania that of late contrives to steal into a mere rowing club.

This region of thought and action, this domain, as M. Sainte-Beuve says, alluding to the "Gaietés Champêtres" of Jules Janin, is constituted by a certain virtuous liberty, which it is difficult to define, but of which it is very easy to feel the meaning, which yields the result that we become of no narrow party, that one is not always either for the attack or on the defensive, that one seeks truth, virtue, and beauty in more than one relation, that the mind is kept open like a window to the beams that enter it, to the bird that passes, to the morning that smiles, or the sunset that inspires. The kind of people that claim it have no spite, that littlest of all the passions, no ambition disappointed generating regret; they have adopted for

* Tom. x. 113. † Les Conseils de la Sagesse, 121.

their personal use this definition of enjoyment, "a peaceable city, contented fortunes, ingenuous and honest pleasure, an honoured country, a bright wholesome air, (that is, of course, when we can get it,) men and heaven indulgent*."

What a thing it would be to give up for ever these intervals of serenity! to renounce through a mistaken wisdom the sweet retiring path of heart's ease, of inward enthusiasm, for all that is good and true and beautiful, which we have enjoyed so often without perceiving that this kind of happiness is as old as the world's first spring! But no—they won't be given up. This academy of serene hours, constituting not indeed the life of Idyls or of the Georgics, but a sort of companionship like that of the old German races, for which every generation yields a supply of fresh members full of vital energy, and now in Christian times enjoying the dawn of an eternal day, as in those beautiful summer nights of the north, when the expiring tints of the setting sun mingle with the rising gleams of the aurora, will remain amidst all ruins, and never want disciples; for, in fact, as the chorus of birds with the old poet demands of the little community they had instituted, "What advantage does it not possess for a man to wish to belong to it?" It has, as we shall find in the sequel, wisdom, love, ambrosial graces, and the cheerful face of gentle-minded serenity, "all which things, under God," as the ancients said, "protect companionship†." You will not be invited to the like feasts or guests every day. Your rower, and rover for the time at least, verifies, whatever be his rank, the character in lowly life described by Chaucer,—

> "A true swynker and a good was he,
> Lyvinge in peace and parfite charitee."

And he exemplifies no less that other ideal,—

> "He was a gentle varlet and a kind,
> A better felow should men nowhere find."

The companionship to which he belongs will gather to its bosom those ideas of reverence, of charity, of justice, of wise

* Causeries du Lundi, tom. v. † Athen. x.

independence, of philosophic and religious conciliation, without betraying truth, which the violence of party spirit may chase from other places. You see how one warms with the subject. Pascal says that all the misfortune of men proceeds from their not knowing how to be at rest in their chamber; but here I am tempted to declare that all their misery and all their faults arise from their not occasionally spending a day on the river. For, looking deeper still, consider again, how many incomparable results may be expected from it. For instance, the genius of such intervals, so to speak, generates no fondness for grafting a good sense on the word "ambition," which, as Coleridge says, "is not a Christian impulse in general." It tends to communicate, on the contrary, a succession of serene and ineffable sentiments, a certain tranquil harmony, a sweet and gracious languor for the moment, causing at the same time an equipoise in all the faculties active or passive; and, as a great author says, with respect to the temper and moral feelings in general, its effect is to foster simply that sort of vital warmth which is approved by the judgment, and which would probably always accompany a bodily constitution of primeval health. "The two great blessings of life," says Sir William Temple, "are, in my opinion, health and good humour, without which life is a burden, and the several conditions of fortune are all wearisome, dull, and disagreeable. Whatever other differences are in life, none will be found so great as what are made by these two circumstances." Now these intervals tend to revive and perpetuate what Lord Clarendon, speaking of England, calls "its old good humour, and its old good nature." This expansion of the benigner feelings becomes no febrile access, no fugitive paroxysm; it resembles a healthy restoration to that state which the mind would naturally recover upon the removal of any deep-seated irritation that had disturbed the impulses of the heart. It helps to compose what had been agitated, and to concentrate what had been distracted; and that too in such a way as to enable us to rise still higher, even as if towards that supreme light to which every one must approach, possessing a good will, a serene temper, and a heart ready to acquiesce in whatever is intended for him by the Creator and Redeemer of mankind. Under its influence one feels, when all is right, that the diviner part of one's

nature is paramount; in other words, that the affections are in a state of greater serenity, and, with regard to many things, as we shall expressly demonstrate later, that in the least and humblest and most unpretending amongst us, high over all shines the great light of the majestic intellect*.

Here, be it affirmed, without incurring the charge of exaggeration, though amidst a crew of juveniles, or on a kind of gipsy party through the fields, "entre la poire et le fromage," as the French would say, we address that lofty and delicate part of our nature where live noble instincts, and where we taste enjoyments that, while mixed as belonging to creatures such as ourselves, are pure. Here, when questions are proposed, as we shall find they will be on all subjects, we see verified the remark of a philosopher, that "feeling seldom makes the blunders that thought does." If religion and toleration, mental cultivation and simplicity of character, liberty and order, faith and wisdom, good sense and the energy of moderation in regard to every thing were banished from all other places of mere human arrangement, we should find at least their ideal and memory here, without boasting, fondly cherished, and in spirit as well as to the letter practised. Confined, with regard to essentials, to the domain of the interior world, for the pleasure of serene hours is quite a thing of thought and secrecy, it is the privilege of those who represent this brotherhood to escape, as I said in the beginning, from the caprice of events. The old chorus of the merry beggars might be sung here with a noble meaning, and interpreted in a lofty sense; for mental enjoyments, such as these, are secure at least from ordinary vicissitudes. Therefore we can join in it, saying—

> "Enough is our feast, and for to-morrow,
> Let rich men care, we feel no sorrow;
> No sorrow, no sorrow, no sorrow, no sorrow;
> Let rich men care, we feel no sorrow."

Is not this better than to write repining and indignant letters like Petrarch, saying, "to whatever side I direct my fatigued limbs I find only stones and thorns. It is time I should go to

* De Quincey.

another world; for I find every thing bad in this one?" Here are the only people who can boast the benefit of a free state, in the full enjoyment of liberty, mirth, and ease; having all things in common, and wanting nothing of nature's whole provision within the reach of their desires. What's all to this absolute freedom? to feast and revel here to-day, and yonder to-morrow; next day where they please, and so on still, the whole country over? There's liberty, the birds of the air can take no more! So, by the way, you see we disdain no estate and seek to borrow good from each. But, what is grave enough to suit the highest school, here, in the sweet, nameless lessons of the scene, is one sentiment, one conscience, the same to a certain extent for all times; here in these lowly retreats, thought, as a great author says, "weaves from unnoticed moments a new link to the chain that unites the ages;" and if charity, with kindness that seems so human, and amusement, as if hand in hand, are found to have banished with their smiles all sadness and all needless distinctions of any kind, is this so great a crime? Surely, as is said in the Tarentines of Alexis,—

> "No one can find a just pretence to grudge us
> Our harmless pleasures, since we never injure
> One of our neighbours, but only seek to enjoy this light."

Ought not every one then to rejoice, rather, that there should be such a fountain of youth as it were accessible to all—that there should be an association suggested as it were by nature, though cemented and vivified by a higher influence, which preserves the traditions of the old Christian civilization, of the old English spirit, while accepting intervals during which we can forget delusions and recognize ourselves? "Yes," as a great French author says, "it is good to feel oneself in the midst of life, with regrets of course in our memory, for we know our own faults, joy even appearing to us as somehow a little foolish, though after all it is never realized, unless we find peace in our soul and indulgence in our heart." Perhaps some one will think this eulogium suitable only to the banquet of Epicurus, where there is an assembly of flatterers praising one another*. But if the

* Athen. v.

perusal of this new kind of log-book should prove as successful to you, good stranger, only just as it were introduced to us to be a companion for our future voyages, as the intervals that gave rise to it have been to many, rare, pleasant, fruitful, and speedy, the time used in turning it over will not be wholly misemployed. Why, this is yet a kind of modern happiness, to find hearts contented with a serene hour.

But now it strikes me that this day's cruise, which was but a sort of trial trip, has been sufficiently prolonged. Our sort of journey, we may observe by the way, will never be found to end like an ordinary one, during which, as a French author remarks, each person has taken especial care of himself at the expense of his neighbour, every one in a bad sense throwing off disguise for the time, and showing himself to be what in his worst hours he really is; this one betraying his anticipated old age, that one his selfishness and coarseness, all without restraint or shame, reserving their urbanity for those who know them on their arrival. These real travellers of the prosaic world are not dainty of leave-taking. They part company without saying farewell to one another; unless, as I would suggest in addition, it be after the fashion of the fox, when he left the goat in the well,

> "——— adieu, j'en suis hors,
> Tâche de t'en tirer, et faire tous tes efforts."

Each picking up his carpet-bag, disappears as quickly and silently as he can, forgetting all attentions and services that some less-knowing companion may have rendered him while on the road. Our expeditions, on the contrary, secret, as it were, all on the quiet, if not on the sly, are unproductive of any advantage in the way of studying and knowing what is called real life, in which every one is for himself, and swift away; they only keep us like children conversant with a sort of poetic life, on a river or in a wood with friends. Nevertheless, each of these excursion gatherings, so ideal in its character, will be found to end always in a very sensible way, so far as acting like the council of Ithaca, people dispersing every one to their own house, or what is better still, as the good Homer expressly distinguishes, to their respective occupations and labours,—ἐπὶ ἔργα

ἕκαστος, awhile to work, and after, holiday. Let's shake hands, then, now as we part to set about contenting Franklin for the rest of the week, till we meet again as fellow-idlers, claiming our undoubted rights and privilege to be so denominated with augmentation and not decrease of honour.

CHAPTER III.

HAT a delicious thing is it to repose under the horse-chestnuts in Bushy Park upon a holiday, within hearing, or at least view, of the fountain, and with crowds of smiling people playing, and singing, and chatting round you! There is one not far off who thought he could procure seats for people here under the trees at each side of the avenue. Concentrating and bringing to bear on this one point the influence of a whole life which he magnanimously resolved within his own mind never to exert again, of course no minister of the crown could resist it. The measure accordingly was carried. He began to talk rather grandly about it already—he might have felt himself all but seated, or rather, what was more his object, seeing others, the poor unknown public seated, towards whom, consequently, in one instance at least, he was to be a real benefactor for all future ages; but fortunately, perhaps, for the permanence of such agreeable convictions, a change of ministry ensued; so that though things in the avenue remained as they were, no great calamity after all for any one, and perhaps even from sitting long in the shade bad colds might have been caught,—who knows?—it was still possible to believe in the irresistible force of his own influence in high places, backed as it really was by early friendship as in heroic times. Though he plays the fox rather just now, speaking of the grapes, you see the real fact was that the ground in this whole place, excepting on the very margin of the road, is so level, that though you may throw yourself and roll about, or feast in a recumbent posture after the

later Roman fashion, the more respectable posture of sitting down like the heroes in earlier times* is out of the question; and, of course, when seated on the very road, the beautiful summer gown and mantle of a party requiring them are sweeping the white dust, a circumstance by no means favourable, in all cases even of the sweetest temper in such a party, to your possession of perfect serenity; though, like virtue itself, you may not care for being, as regards your own person, somewhat pulverulent. Horace, it is true, though in a dusty land, intent only on his own comfort, never seems to have thought of any one feeling such an inconvenience, saying—

"Libet jacere modo sub antiqua ilice
Modo in tenaci gramine.
Labuntur altis interim ripis aquæ;
Queruntur in sylvis aves;
Fontesque lymphis obstrepunt manantibus,
Somnos quod invitet leves."

But here, for all that, the great work remains to be achieved by some future friend of the fair and amiable unknown†. The approach to this felicitous region is equally delightful, whether you make it by land or by water. I am free to confess, as the parliamentary phrase is, that my pleasantest associations connected with it are bound to the former, when we used to walk there from Twickenham, the sun looking with a southward eye upon us, which only gave us a greater aptitude for enjoying the shade of the long dark avenue when we reached it. With those you are fond of, what a walk is that under the umbrageous canopy! I forbear to speak of the palace and the gardens, so full of historical and artistic interest—for I am again "free to confess" that in those days we did not much care for the grandeur of either of them. The maze did attract our silly hearts; and a merry half-hour we used to spend in it with our wise and sweet heart too, as Plato qualifies it; but what was for the time most to the taste of both these hearts of ours, after the long walk in the heat, was reclining on the grass just in the way described on

* Athen. lib. i. 31.

† This conclusion was premature. The seats were placed in the avenue a month after.

the classic page near the entrance of the avenue, where thirsty souls are wont to congregate, watching every thing, chatting or listening at times—or hearing within the gate some school children singing, some foreigners making onslaughts upon English, some holiday folk laughing, and some doves cooing over all our heads.

So now at last the party is formed, and the first regular excursion is to come off; but as the daughters of Oldrent say, when they are about to join the company of the merry crew, how to enter first, or arrange yourselves amongst them, will perhaps be the difficulty. Only fancy people who are wholly opposite in tastes and character finding themselves suddenly thrown amongst a set of regular spring-loves. If we light raw and tame amongst them, said they (like cage-birds among a flight of wild ones), "we shall have our brains peck'd out." Well, in this case you will do well at first to observe only and be silent, to watch and listen. Put on a good-humoured face. Pursue the course we are on as cheerfully as the inviting season smiles upon you; think how you are necessitated to it; and by degrees you will fall into our ways, and thenceforth "you'll find a progress of such pleasure, as we'll govern it, that the most happy courts could never boast in all their tramplings on the countries' cost."

Beauty is a very mysterious subject, and no doubt a very delicate one too for us to handle. We are not about to deliver an oration on it just now, lest some witty comrade should be able to cry out when he and all the rest had jumped ashore, All hail, ye seven pupils of the dealer in quotations! namely, the two sides of the boat and the five benches across it, not to name the oars and the painter. Witty and very classical reproof; but for all that we must set out on our rambles, "cum zephyris, et hirundine primâ," begging pardon first of Catullus, who has "horrificans Zephyrus proclivas concitat undas," and of Sainte-Beuve, ready to accuse us of using that "eternal zephyr which reigned in France since Voiture;" we must set out, I say, by remarking that a certain sense of beauty seems involved in every conception that we can form of passing a serene hour. To produce beauty itself before one in all its loveliness is indeed another matter. And yet you have a sense of beauty; I too,

perhaps, am not amerced of it; then why should not we be able between us to knock up something that will represent it? Men can meet for business or for dissipation,—that to them impatient is only another business,—they can meet for polemical discussion or political debate, or for schemes of aggrandizement by means of a water party, or for a thousand other things without requiring any great development of such a capacity. No great danger of their falling in love with the subject;

> "Car le moindre ducaton
> Seroit bien mieux leur affaire;"

but so intimately woven with the secret springs of our thought and action when not purposely turned from it is a sense of beauty, and love for beauty, that it is not very easy to conceive how, if wholly amerced of it, men could be moved to meet for what we understand by the enjoyment of such an hour.

It may, however, with confidence be repeated that there is no great danger of every one falling in love with the subject. No, certainly, in times like these, when, as a great critic remarks, between hideousness of body and hideousness of soul is found the solution of the problem which is self-imposed by multitudes, namely, the knowledge or science of ugliness; for there are not a few who seem to make a study of the details of common life, spying out all the defects of the most vulgar natures, and every day stealing from this observation a thousand execrable secrets, merely as being fertile in emotions, thinking to find the true in the horrible, and the horrible in the true, preferring even to history such portraits as they can discern in the most loathsome haunts of crime. What is beauty, physical or moral, to these disfigurers of all nature, dissecting it through the rage for arriving at what they imagine to be the true, which, under their management, turns out to be a frightful thing, enough to discourage and make wretched any one, seeing beauty exchanged for deformity, and virtue changed into vice? for the result of this devotion to the horrible is to leave neither hope in the mind, nor tears in the eyes, nor flowers in the hands, and nothing even in the heart. Unfortunate race! as he justly exclaims in concluding, they got rid of the soul first, and then of the beautiful vesture, and now they must glutton on these corpses. It is

clear, then, that we have no favour to expect from our systematic and sophistic disparagers under a garb of literature, when we propose such a theme as the present.

But that is no great matter. There are others not much thought of, who will follow us, and it is to them I turn.

"The old prosaical charge against hyperbolical praises of the beautiful we hold to be naught," says an eminent author; and this is one of the golden sentences extracted from his "Jar of Honey;" but without having even gathered so much from it, one, without possessing any exceptional degree of penetration, may perceive that for a true and deep sense of the harmony of things, for agreeable conversation that rises in the least above triviality, for the mutual interchange of friendly and loving thoughts, for seeing or hearing any thing graceful or striking in nature or art, for the mere pleasure of distinguishing in a higher sense than a brute animal the exquisite loveliness of a fine day, resplendent with luminous air, in which all objects are bathed, from a day that one might call a modern Gothic one, on which you cannot see any thing a yard or two before you, for the charm of gazing on a glorious sky, or an agreeable spot to sit down in, a certain degree of this sensibility is indispensable. Unless we possess it, there can be no full enjoyment even of any of the adventures which are incident to excursions like ours; for these always derive a great portion of their charm from the effect of outlines and colour and other things that enter into the composition of the picture which they animate. We of the Thames are likely to sing with Walton,—

> "I care not, I, to boat on seas,
> Fresh rivers best my mind do please,
> Whose sweet calm course I contemplate,
> And seek in life to imitate."

But as in August and September all the world must flock to "Marine Parades," "Paragons," "Sea Hotels," and such like places, there is no objection to our seeking an example to illustrate our proposition in these later haunts. Let us suppose, then, for instance, that having by way of a change removed from the neighbourhood of fresh water, we are navigating some evening the dreary regions through which the Stour circuitously

expands into the main,—that in order to lighten our boat, sticking on the bar of sand at its mouth, we have to deposit for a few minutes, till we get her off it, all our company on a sort of desert island, formed by an extreme receding of the tide; while, up to our middles in water, we shove the threatened vessel through a stream that would take a horse off his legs, our dog all the time barking as if he was out of his mind, rendering things in confusion, if possible, worse confounded. So far we have only a critical moment, being anxious, for the sake of the passengers, to avoid passing a night in this disconsolate situation, for in fact a few minutes later the craft will be immoveable, and then we should furnish a ludicrous illustration of the fate sometimes reserved for the seekers of serene hours; in fact, a pattern of all the painful adventures now in print. But with a sense of beauty awakened, how many things to observe at that moment with a painter's eye! There are, for instance, the poor little unprotected females standing all in a row, remaining so meekly in obedience to orders, each in the precise spot that she was let drop off your back upon the sand, with the red gleams of the setting sun behind them, causing them to appear as dark as so many negroes; there are the lights kindling, though not for you, alas! on the distant shore, which is becoming enveloped in deeper and deeper shades; there are the foaming breakers beating against the ill-fated boat, and the curlews taking flight from one sand-bank to another; in short, you have a picture of a wild but great beauty. Now, in some form or other, wild or serene, such are the pleasures reserved for all who go out for the day with a power of appreciating the charms of colour and of form in scenery. Just think what a picture could be made out of a bank under a willow lined with tall reeds and aquatic leaves, such as would fill Ruskin with ecstasy at their graceful shapes, and a boat held to them by a fair hand, and all this on a bright summer's day at noon! The mere memory of it is enough to put a brush in your hand. And yet that there are persons among the educated, as well as in the rudest life, really for all practical purposes deprived of this power to see beautiful things, and that too as if by an hereditary misfortune, is as certain as that there will be many to scoff and disparage the whole idea of excursions made to enjoy, or of a book intended

to set forth the advantages of serene hours. Accordingly there are persons who never think of meeting for any one of these latter purposes, unless in a perverted sense, or in one too transcendental for common mortals, and who, if they could have their will, would never suffer any one else to meet for them in a natural and legitimate way. We wonder sometimes at this obduracy, which seems so inexplicable, and phenomenal, and unnatural, and portentous. What! never take an innocent holiday in a common way?—never a walk in public gardens?—never any exercise or repose in the open air, but what is prescribed merely by some Dr. Purgon for bodily health?—never care to join the party listening to the music?—never to bask on a sunny slope, or encounter the coming on of night and tempest in a wherry?—never to converse on any subject less strict than A + B? The only explanation that can be given is that for several generations in a direct line the sense of beauty has never been awakened in their race. A turnip-field in Essex under a north-east wind gives them as much pleasure as they would receive from a stroll through the vale of Tempe under May zephyrs; one of those raw, cold blue and green drawings, annually seen in Suffolk-street, strikes them more than a dawn or sunset by Claude; a steam thrashing-machine is more interesting in their eyes than a model of the Parthenon; a leading article in the newspaper is more to their taste than a page of Dryden or Goldsmith. These are the men and women ever restless or immoveable, ever ready for calculation, ready for discussion and opposition,—as ready for detraction perhaps,—ready for demanding some object of expensive finery, or for securing a reserved seat at some show that is much talked about; ready at home perhaps for some servile manipulation, requiring no aid from fancy, or the sense of beauty, or the power of imitating any thing of God's workmanship; but to enjoy a serene hour with you in the way we are supposing they are not ready, and what's more, they never will be ready to the end of their lives.

Well, then, let it be understood from all this, that we require in ourselves and in our companions a certain taste for beauty, a disposition to love all that is gracious, and to smile on all that is fair, without wanting absolutely the useful at all times, wanting to have vinegar from daisies, wine from roses, and flour

from poppies. When his housekeeper would say to the good Bishop Bienvenu, in a celebrated work of fiction, "you who turn every thing to account, why do you leave that plot of ground useless? Would not a few salads be better than all those nosegays?" "Madame Magloire," the bishop used to reply, "you are wrong there. The beautiful is as useful as the useful," after a pause adding—"aye, more useful perhaps."

But what is meant by that expression—beauty? The beauty of which the sense is so essential an element in the capacity on which we are to treat, is, in the first place, not that of convention, an exclusive thing, determined by arbitrary or scientific rules, which addresses itself only to a skilled eye and a learned judgment, determined perhaps by theories which only cause division of opinion, and often even hostile parties in art, when men professing to cultivate it say to each other with much bitterness, after exhausting all their one-sided rhetoric,—

> "Non eadem miramur: eo disconvenit inter
> Meque et te;"

and perhaps proceed so far in the instance of architecture as to say, like the President de Brosses, "qui dit Gothique dit presque infailliblement un mauvais ouvrage;" while others seek to show themselves clever in the abuse, as extravagant and unjust, of every style distinguishable from it. This is not the sort of sense of which the presence here is desirable; this is only "the envious poverty of an exclusive love," conducing to any thing rather than to serene enjoyment. But what we want to find is that natural sense for unsophisticated beauty which the simplest eye recognizes at a glance, without stopping to measure it by any predetermined rules, and which is even heedless of their violation if there be any such admitted; it is what Balzac styles irregular beauty that strikes at first sight, and which, he remarks, is better than that which satisfies the judgment, such being at least the ancient sentence conveyed in these words, "Illud multum est, primo adspectu oculos occupasse, etiamsi contemplatio diligens inventura est quod arguat. Si me interrogas, major ille est qui judicium abstulit, quam qui meruit." This sense, then, although quite unscientific, which is required here as a qualification, is concerned with beauty in

all its divisions, as existing in the face of nature, in the human person, in manners, in mind, and in sound.

We ought to be able to distinguish, in regard to the first kind, the influence produced by the woodland undulations of Hampstead, and that by an endless succession of flat bottle-green fields and formal hedgerows skirting them—between the gardens of Twickenham, the bowery dwellings redolent of sweet flowers and bees and a guitar, even the sunny, cheerful gravel walks and parterres, with their Chinese temples and bridges, for which some men of European taste have had a fondness, and the cold, leafless plains, with ragstone fences, begging Mr. Ruskin's pardon, of some of our midland counties,—unpoetic tracts, where you meet neither the sheds of the herdsman nor the solitary cattle-tending youth, but only now and then some sinister-looking "tramp" in sailor's clothes, adding a sort of terror, not wholly groundless, to the dull scene. The great author from whom one has just presumed to differ concerning fences, though it is dangerous to differ from him, as from some one point of view or other he is almost always right, speaking of his first visit to the north of Scotland, says, "It seemed to me that there was a peculiar painfulness in its scenery, caused by the non-manifestation of the powers of human art. I had never travelled in, nor even heard or conceived of such a country before." Without following him in the strange conclusion that he proceeds to draw, I think we should be able to share with him in this first impression of his, and feel how much charm wild scenery acquires from the little gracefulnesses and tenderness of human work which are generally mingled with it. There is even a sense of beauty of colouring and form in landscape that has never been in presence of the objects themselves which it longs for, that is not a little conducive to our purpose. For instance, if one's childhood has been conversant with paintings representing Italy or the south of France, it will be an indication of eligibility if in later life we should find him able to refer to those early impressions the charm produced by the actual scenery that they represented. When some one, to take an example near at hand, descended from the Alps into Italy for the first time, still a youth, what was it that enchanted his eyes and his heart? It was not alone the presence of that incom-

parable combination of art and nature; it was partly also the remembrance of the pictures representing it which had delighted his young fancy hanging on the walls of his father's rooms, and the work of his dear hands. There should be the capacity to view the real landscape as if it were a picture. There ought to be, in general, a taste for beauty whether in nature or in art, such as is evinced, for instance, in that description by Frederick Tennyson of the view obtained from the top of the cathedral of Milan. One must be able to enjoy such a scene as is beheld from the ramparts of Berkeley Castle, looking over the Severn to the Welsh mountains, and that without any reference to feudalism or fox-hounds.

One might run on thus for ever, and tell, for further instances, of what one ought to feel when seeing Avignon at sunset from the opposite side of the blue Rhone, across its wooded islands—the vast enclosing walls and the noble palace of the Popes, lighted up with golden splendour, and in the distance the mountains of Vaucluse varying from rose to purple, or, moment serener still, how one was impressed with a sense of graceful beauty when sitting near the Chateau d'Eau at Montpellier on a summer's morning before sunrise, when all the city slept.

> "Le jour naît; dans les prés et sous les taillis verts
> Allons, allons cueillir et des fleurs et des vers,
> Tandis que la ville repose.
> La fleur ouvre au matin plus de pourpre et d'azur,
> Et le vers, autre fleur, s'épanouit plus pur,
> A l'aube humide qui l'arrose."

But confining ourselves to what is at hand, we require that there should be a capacity for feeling the charm of our Thames as it washes those gardens, so intimately associated with the memory of Pope and Garrick, begging pardon from the eloquent disparager of the latter, and indeed throughout its course, at least upwards, where it retains its pure inland character. How many spots might we particularize, as almost justifying our comparing it to the Peneus in the vale of Tempe, or to the Ladon in Arcadia; or our applying to it the words "cælo gratissimus amnis!" Let me not pass in silence Walton-bridge for instance,

with its long, graceful sweep, and its quaint decorative architecture, so preposterous as some will think, but having for all that a certain charm as bespeaking another age, or the sudden bend of the river at Halliford, with its little island possessing in the season one haycock, and always its one willow-tree, a real tight little island, or the view up the river there at sunset, from the stone steps beneath the lovely little strips of garden from which very polite juvenile anglers ply their craft, or our favourite swimming-places, as from the green banks between Shepperton Lock and Penton Hook, where you may have the odour of the new-mown hay, and hear the crake of the landrail, and enjoy a triumphant return from the opposite bank carrying in your mouth a bulrush ten feet long, while tasting, as it were, the solitude, and yet the sunny cheerfulness of the scene. For in this spot we may address to our Thames the lines of Bryant to the green river—

> "Yet fair as thou art, thou shunnest to glide,
> Beautiful stream! by the village side;
> But windest away from haunts of men,
> To quiet meadows and shaded glen:
> And thicket, and hedges, and slope of hill,
> Around thee, are lonely, lovely, and still;
> Lonely—save when, by thy rippling tides,
> From willow to willow the angler glides;
> Or haply, some idle dreamer, like me,
> To wander, and muse, and gaze on thee."

Neither let us refrain from descanting upon the charm of the luminous air, of the water reflecting every object as clearly as it is seen in itself, the pleasure of having to cut through the long prairies of broad-leaved water-lilies, observing further on the sparkling eddies of the curling stream, and the varied tints of the pale osier and the willow, mingled with the rich exotic trees that adorn the villas, having each their gardens sloping down to the river, their arbours and bowers, their temples, begging pardon of the Goths, and terraces recalling Oriental nights and mornings. The sense that can be fed with such objects and such impressions is no doubt needful for the accomplishment of our general object on all these excursions. Every

one does not feel the beauty of such scenes, or of others more picturesque and grand. Of course not! You have only to read such travels as those of the President de Brosses in Italy, in which he speaks of the hideous rocks that lined his road to Genoa, to witness proof that the picturesque as well as the beautiful in more regular form is a world in itself, to which some men are total strangers. Lucretius thinks that the picturesque beauty of the world is a defect which proves it could not have been divinely created.

> "Inde avidam partem montes, sylvæque ferarum
> Possedere, tenent rupes, vastæque paludes *."

And, at least for a moment, Bentley seems to concede that "the horrid deformity of rocks and crags, and of long ridges of barren mountains," may be proof of this world not being intended to pass for a paradise. Ruskin thinks that even Horace in his journey to Brundusium takes as much interest in the scenery he is passing through as Sancho Panza would have done. At all events, there are plenty of people without this kind of taste; and accordingly, however sorry we may be to say so, it is not every one who can enjoy, in our sense of the word, a serene hour.

Again, there ought to be some capacity for perceiving beauty in the human countenance and form, apart from all mere artificial adjuncts furnished by the attire; not that we should be wholly indifferent to the mind that presides over dress and what is exterior, which ought to have beauty of some sort or other of its own. On the contrary, for the very reason that its absence would indicate a certain disposition of mind that is sure to prove disagreeable, we should require a due attention to what is externally becoming. Our comrades, if not in all the fervour of first boots, must wish to be as spruce as any neighbour's sons among you, neat, and to have well-washed faces, as Homer is not above noticing in the line—

> Αἰεὶ δὲ λιπαροὶ κεφαλὰς καὶ καλὰ πρόσωπα.

"Doublets that hangmen would bury with those that wore

* Lib. v.

them" do not prejudice any of us in favour of those who affect such raiment. The scurvy old Tread Beetle that wears shoes like an elephant's hoofs, and who says that he will persist in wearing just such a hat and just such shoes as he pleases, adding with Sganarolle,

> "Ainsi qu'en ont usé sagement nos aïeux,
> Et qui me trouve mal n'a qu'à fermer lex yeux,"

does pretty much the same as tell you to your face that he would not pinch himself to please any one; and he may be believed without an oath when he tells you so. For all his gravity he may be told, however, that even St. Augustine, at least at one time of his life, when he wrote on beauty, recognized as belonging to it the proportion which adapts a shoe to a foot. Plato speaks of a man, clever in other respects, who has no idea how to dress himself like any one else; and Alexis says—

> "'Tis a sure sign of a degraded nature
> To walk along the streets in sloven's guise,
> Having the means of neatness; which costs nothing;
> Is subject to no tax; requires no charge;
> And creditable is to him who uses it,
> And pleasant to all those who witness it.
> Who then would ever disregard this rule,
> That wishes to be thought a man of sense *?"

To be sure there are circumstances in life when it is but fair to show indulgence, and not require much actual result in this way, as when the stuck-up girl said to a young scholar who offered himself for her partner at the open-air dance, "But you have no gloves!" and heard the innocent answer,—"Oh! I shall wash my hands after it's over." Having arrived late one Saturday night at a village about twenty miles south of Lyons, of which I forget the name, it seemed the wisest thing for a well-jolten and much-bruised hirer of a Swiss char-à-banc, as also for the lad who drove it, to stop there for the night. Next morning, for this piece of jelly was myself, I was awoke very early by a prolonged tapping,—

* Athen. i.

"Who's dat knocking at the door?"

On inquiring what was the matter, or, as I ought to have expressed myself,—

"What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?"

I was told by a girl's voice, and not Bottom's, to get up immediately, if it pleased me, as the village wanted the looking-glass. Having a smooth chin in those days at all hours, and not one razorable, as Antonio says, I was quite pleased to pass the wanted article at once through the next thing to a key-hole that I could improvise under the spur of the instant; and then on peeping more leisurely out of the window, where I heard a great chattering, I saw some dozen, not fairies, but young fellows of good substantial flesh and blood, waiting outside to make use of the mirror after my lordship had done with it. Now, looking back at the circumstance, I am of opinion that all this was very natural, and pretty, and agreeable, as indicative of a sense of beauty even under difficulties, which is a thing that may be desirable even here on the Thames, where its absence would signify an unamiable and offensive idiosyncrasy. We object, therefore, on very philosophical grounds to such habits and such company. But, on the other hand, there ought to be a sense, not unconnected with virtue in youth, that can distinguish true beauty under all circumstances with as much delight as it recognizes genius and goodness. Not to us, indeed, first do the things that are beautiful appear to be beautiful. Who has not heard of the days when, for instance, as the sage Daliarte told Don Duardos, no one had ever seen Miraguarda once who would not venture his life for a second sight of such beauty*? And, by the way, that peerless light shone from a castle in an islet of a river; so that our haunts need not be destitute in respect to such visions; but "beauty for all that," as a great French author says, "has also its epochs. All persons and all generations do not seem to taste it in its exquisite truth. As there are manners which deaden the sense of it, and fashions which spoil it, so there are times which alter the consciousness of its presence†."

* Palmerin of Eng.

† Cousin, Mdme. de Longueville.

What is wanting is the capacity to feel its essential charm in such persons of either sex as naturally

"Blow like sweet roses in the summer air."

What could one make of you if you were to mistake for it that coloured, made-up, pompous envelope of moral hideousness where nature is void and false, an abyss of egotism, and to which nothing is wanting, as a great observer says, but a soul? Or what, on the other hand, could one hope from you, if you were to be wholly unable to appreciate a real natural smile that makes radiant as one delicious light of beauty the whole figure from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, even though, to speak artistically as if giving a name to our picture, it were on "washing day," when an old bonnet is reversed in a waggish way upon the head, and at every wink of an eye some new grace seems to be born, while the whole apparel is but a cento, or the ruins of ten fashions; and when as a sort of natural consequence of such neglect, by a law of the metaphysics of dress, instead of stately elegance you are reminded by seeing one who numbers seventeen summers of the arch fun and hearty laughter of a child?

"How sometimes nature will betray its folly,
Its tenderness, and make itself a pastime
To harder bosoms!"

These hard bosoms have a great contempt for what is fair and becoming. Oh, how clever perhaps you once thought yourself for possessing one of them with all its provision of scorn! Nothing could elicit your approval but the positive and the forbidding. Well, what do we hear from you now?

"—— le coquin! le drôle! le bandit!
L'hypocrite qu'il est nous a tous attrapés.
Il possédait si bien la langue des affaires,
Était si positif; riait tant des chimères,
Traitait la poésie avec tant de mépris,
Que j'ai cru qu'il serait le meilleur des maris *!"

* Ponsard, L'Honneur et l'Argent.

So you are brought at last to our way of thinking, and are all for the picture of "washing day" and for those who can admire it. But from the first let me assure your scrupulous perspicuities, that we were saying nothing that is not perfectly in tone with an honourable oration, Socratic—even of Plato. Cicero himself, all stately and delicate as he is, condescends to compare the beauty of a certain kind of uncorrected and uncombed oration to that of a person whose dress shows a negligence that itself becomes her. You may be melancholy sometimes, but you are ill qualified to profit either by study at home or recreation abroad if you are not of such a mind that its distaste one of these sunny looks of the human countenance will not soon repair; for if you are in a land that may be qualified as καλλιγύναικα, where is there any book or any garden that teaches such gladness as a human eye? It will spoil nothing if you be one like Biron, who says we owe more to women's faces than to books. Yes, "'tis a fair guest beauty; and once lodged in the eyes, she hardly leaves the inn." You must be ready to say, if an occasion offer, like the Duke,—

> "Tell her my love, more noble than the world,
> Prizes not quantity of dirty lands:
> The parts that fortune hath bestow'd upon her,
> Tell her, I hold as giddily as fortune;
> But 'tis that miracle and queen of gems
> That nature pranks her in attracts my soul."

In general, though you may have never handled charcoal or studied a Greek statue, you must be able to use your eyes, as no doubt they were intended to be used, when they are turned upon the human form when handsome from head to foot. You must be ready to think enthusiastically of it, like Decker, when he describes it in these few words, that seem to end rather humorously:—

> "A thousand blessings danced upon his eyes;
> A smooth-faced glorious thing, that brought this basket."

The pure charm of that beauty which is every moment developed in a fresh contour by each change of posture, such as is required

by any common exertion, must not be thrown away on you, as if wholly wanting the taste that presides over its creation. You ought to be able to feel with writers on taste that a rich, grand attire is seldom graceful, and that often the dress of the commonalty and of labour is graceful*. In the street or in the field, as in the gallery of the Vatican or the Louvre, you must discover models of exquisite grace, intended and fashioned by our Maker, in every group of common people and in every circle of boys at their athletic games, whether rowing, cricketing, wrestling, or taking a loving walk together with arms thrown round each other's necks. And I can tell you, there's many of them would defy the painter. If you can't discern the beauty arising from these changes of attitude—for I will not suppose you recognizing and at the same time objecting to it—it is probable that you want the sense of which I speak; and though you may not be called on exactly to throw up your oar at once, there is some reason to fear that you are not intended for that enjoyment of thoughtful repose and of calm acquiescence in the charms shed around you which form so important an element in the participation of a serene hour. On a future expedition, we shall have to speak of the art of watching people for the sake of loving them. Here we must remark the need of a little sly observation for the sake of admiring them, and with a view to cultivate that sensibility which is required for æsthetic studies, with the results of which our general object is always in very strict relation. Yes; the habit of viewing artistically as many people as can be so viewed, is not to be despised.

Let it be understood, however, that more is required than a sense of that extraordinary beauty of which the effects seem irresistible. We read that whole assemblies have been known to yield to the good looks of the Duc de Guise, that there was no heart which could hold out against his face. He persuaded you before opening his mouth, and it was impossible in his presence to wish him ill. The first look that he gave his enemies was to deprive them of all the bitterness they had been nourishing against him, causing such an emotion in their blood and humours, that after that, it required a long effort on their part

* Montesquieu, Essai sur le Gout.

to recover the hatred which they had lost. "I heard a courtier of the time say," relates Balzac, "that the Huguenots were of the league when they looked at the Duc de Guise." Madame la Maréchale de Retz said, "They had such good looks, these Lorraine princes, that by their side other princes looked like common people. This," adds the same author, "was a manner of speaking indeed a little bold and somewhat bourgeois, but the court is above the school, and recognizes no jurisdiction but its own." Such faces are not to be met with every day, at least in high regions; but what we desire is the capacity for admiring average beauty, which, though neither extreme nor perfect, and however often repeated, is the most fitted, as a great author remarks *, for perpetual contemplation by the human mind. It is, however, a very delicate attribute, and, as already suggested, one closely allied with innocence; for, as just suggested, it is fatal to that divine mortal envelope, as Jules Janin calls it, when it does not enclose a heart and a soul. And therefore the same author says in another place, "My dear girls, let me inform you of a thing of great importance; un grand secret pour être belle c'est d'être bonne. Il n'est rien de plus certain †." This capacity for being pleased with the ordinary type of human beauty, as seen every where, implies a general willingness to admit that we have no authority or right, as Balzac says, to disparage it, that beauty is a gift of God, and with an instinctive feeling that if we ought not to abuse it neither ought we to despise it, or make little of this ray of the future life, as he terms it,—that we ought not, as he says, to be "in such bad humour as to blame what is generally esteemed." In short, there is needed, without any arbitrary exclusions or reserves, that disposition, in purity and simplicity, which is expressed in those words of thanksgiving addressed to God by the Psalmist, "Thou hast delighted me by what thou hast made." For this end we must observe what He has made, not pass it by as if beneath our notice. This explains why the artistic sense of beauty may be so great a thing. "I do not hesitate to affirm," says an illustrious prelate ‡, "that art seems to me as an intermedium

* Ruskin. † La Semaine des Trois Jeudis.

‡ L'Evêque d'Orléans, "Lettres sur les Études qui peuvent convenir aux Loisirs d'un Homme du Monde."

between earth and heaven. I see it dominant above passions, and vile interests, and even above that narrow, cold, and often wearisome rationality which constitutes the foundation and the general aspect of what is really vulgar life. I see it elevating men to a higher region, where one breathes a purer air, and where, we might say, one becomes more of a soul, that is, where is developed in us more fully that immaterial existence which is always here below engaged in a struggle with the gross side of life, and of which the perfection is found only in God. Habits of such observation, even without the corresponding art of expression, appear to me to be requisite to constitute a noble and serene life; and," adds Dupanloup, the bishop of Orleans, "I do not refer only to those delicate pleasures, to those exquisite enjoyments which belong to those habits and studies; I allude to the nobleness communicated by means of them to the mind, to the sentiments, to the whole soul." We require then for our especial purpose this love of beauty, which is identical with a love of the Creator's workmanship. Nor can this be thought demanding too much, since even on all occasions the remarkable author, whose words we have just heard, declares that he would have more of art, more of the sentiment of art in human life generally, and that, in order that there should be in it less vulgarity and prosaic insensibility, more of impulse and of disinterestedness. "I believe firmly," he continues, "that virtue would find an assistance in the elevated dispositions which this love of beauty imparts to the soul; and not only that individuals, but that an epoch and a whole community would gain in intellectual elevation." So that, for these hours of exceptional serenity, we regard the fruit of such delicate observations, which, while they charm, elevate, and ennoble our nature, keep us above trivialities and baseness, incline us to generous sentiments, and diffuse good humour and a kind of angelic felicity in whatever direction we turn our steps. To achieve a successful going out for the day, or a serene hour, we want, in fact, what Mr. Ruskin lays down as a law in all noble art, "man's delight in God's work." If you are deficient in this respect, it seems to me as if it would be idle in you to proceed farther; for it is probable that with such insensibility you can enjoy yourself quite as much with your own thoughts, such as they are, κατὰ μέγαρα

σκιόεντα, shut up in the dark closet of a Gothic house, knowing nothing better, as Montesquieu says, "than the thickness of your castle walls," as if you were in the loveliest garden of the world, or the wildest tract of bulrushes that can be found on the Thames, in either place consorting with your fellow-creatures, and hearing both them and the birds sing round you.

Another qualification of the same order, closely and mysteriously allied to the last, is a sense of beauty in manners; to which, in fact, as already observed, we owe our taste for the former. What the Greeks called πρέπον, and the Latins 'decorum,' must be innate in ourselves and in our company; for a want of this sense would be as fatal to our especial purpose as it is generally found injurious in life, in a poem, or in an oration. There must be an instinctive sense of what constitutes beauty in manners, even when they are confined to a boat or to a summer-house. Excluded, consequently, from the intervals we allude to, are all those who take pleasure in words or acts of insolence, or in any provocations of offence. Excluded are licentious men, impetuous spirits, prone to wanton outrages and to anger when made to feel their stupid mistake. Self-excluded in every form, in short, is malice, so often allied with that spirit

"——— quæ procudit enses
Et miseras inimicat urbes."

Some one, perhaps, talks of glory. Well, if that's all he can boast of, he won't curry much favour in such company as ours; for, as Pazzorello says wittily, "Soldiers may talk, but there's neither wit nor honesty in making so many cripples." Comes there in a swaggerer, however pale a representative of the class? Every one must exclaim with the poet, to the same purport as mine hostess—It is Thracian

"——— tollite barbarum morem."

A just claimant to admittance here must also be one who in general

"The grosser manner of the world's delights
Will throw upon the gross world's baser slaves."

He must not resemble Woodhamore in the old play, who likes

no birds but what he calls yellow-hammers. He must not be one to please such a person as Lucina, who complimenting Travers on his doings, says,

> "——— Did not you
> Travel to Yarmouth, and learn how to cast
> Brass buttons? Nay, I like it; 'tis an age
> For men to look about them. Shall I trust
> My estate to one that has no thrift? a fellow
> But with one face? My husband shall be a Janus;
> He cannot look too many ways. And is
> Your patent for making vinegar confirm'd?
> What a face you put upon't! Nay, ne'er dissemble.
> Come, I know all; you'll thank that friend of yours
> That satisfied my inquiry of your worth
> With such a welcome character."

Further, there must be, to some extent, a positive sense of what constitutes grace and delicacy in action. It won't do to be, as a popular author says, without romance, without tenderness, without geniality, sympathy, half-wishes, or any of the little loveable traits which are the vital breath, not alone of a party of pleasure, but of life any where. One can't fancy serene hours in the polar regions. Neither will it do to be lumpish, heavy, melancholy, fastidious, and haughty, though

> "Only good to chronicle small beer."

We want some faculty for witty tricks like those of Maria; of which 'twas said by some one, that many would take her and ask no other dowry with her but such another jest. For our expeditions we are not so unreasonable, indeed, as to require in the other sex one of those impossible heroes who are to be met with in the pages of French romance, who never have a failure, are never at a loss, never in a hurry, still less in a sweat; who are never hungry, never thirsty, never sleepy, never, in short, subject to any human weakness; and the most genuine specimen of whom is to be found in "the immortal pages which record the history of the Count de Monté Cristo." Perhaps were we to get it we should not be a bit the more serene for consorting with perfection of this kind. At all events, we must in general

take heroes as we find them in real life. I suppose one must be content now-a-days, or on such occasions, to see them, as a woman says wittily, alluding to a cigar or pipe, like babies fond of sucking. But if so, there must be some tiny English redeeming qualities, and withal intervals of willing abstinence from the tawny weed. Hearts must be full and sprightly, and, withal, clear. It was said once of a Greek, and virtuous man, that he had not sacrificed to the Graces. One might say to some in our times, with all their virtue, that not only had they never sacrificed to the Graces, but that they had overthrown their altars. One cannot approach them, as Balzac says, without being pricked. They have thorns all over their body. Their praises wound, their caresses scratch, and they cannot oblige without disobliging. They promise with brows that menace, and grant favours with the very tone that others refuse them. These are the men, whether young or old, who are good at malice, good at mischief, all that can spoil, perplex, or trouble a business thoroughly. It is needless to add, that on the hours, however or wherever spent, of such persons, we seek not to philosophize.

But it is not alone a sense of beauty of countenance, form, and of manners, that must be possessed for the purpose we have in view. It will be necessary to have in addition a capacity for enjoying that beauty of mind from which all the rest derives its charm; and therefore let the wise people who looked so displeased just now when we cited the words of Biron and the Duke, hide their heads here.

> "——— If the body carry
> So many graces, it is heaven within
> Where the soul is,"

says Catalina of Don Antonio de Ribeiro, in an old play. It is the power of detecting and appreciating this kind of beauty that we ought now to insist upon. How can you by any effort of imagination associate in your mind the idea of serene hours with what Lady Bornwell describes as "this country conversation?"

> "——— the men
> So near the primitive making, they retain

A sense of nothing but the earth; their brains
And barren heads standing as much in want
Of ploughing as their ground."

What is the use of hinting at intervals of this kind to such "coarse woollen-witted fellows" as Celestina speaks of, such as you cannot

"——— with all the characters
And conjuring circles charm a woman, though
She'd fourscore years upon her, and but one
Tooth in her head, to love or think well of?"

We by no means approve of persons who are inclined on any occasion to do or invite us to do the sentimental; but you ought to esteem, and desire, and be able to discover in those who are to partake of a serene evening with you, a mind that can make the mind of its possessor ever May; and a heart whose kindness, even without its memories, can at moments

"Surprise you to the very brink of tears."

What is wanting, indeed, is not a mere easy creature, one with whom time ambles, like a rich man that hath not the gout; one with whom you have honey as sauce to sugar, whose talk is in a style quintessenced in triviality; you ought to be able to relish those

"Who have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends;"

otherwise, perhaps, when one expected to be serene with you, he will share the fate of him who, being rudely and unseasonably constrained to return to himself, to his bare, positive, naked self, and that, too, perhaps, coarsely photographed with every blemish aggravated, after the sun's manner, which is notorious, exclaimed,

"—— Pol, me occidistis, amici,
Non servastis,—cui sic extorta voluptas,
Et demptus per vim mentis gratissimus error."

We cannot dispense, therefore, with that sort of natural good

breeding of mind and heart common to all classes alike, if not even oftenest found among poor persons, which indicates a deep, unseen, interior beauty. It would never do to take in the boat, or into the groves, with you one who wanted this accomplishment, whatever he might be in other respects. He would be sure to prove offensive, without even intending to make an unkind allusion. Things that might be painful for any one to hear about himself, though it were only some reflection or another on his own advanced time of life, by an awkward vaunting of what other people's comparative youth can be supposed to accomplish, things infinitely little and contemptible, no doubt, in themselves, but still things that persons of no education, as they are called, and, above all, women, would fly from uttering, through an inherent kindness that shrinks with admirable instinct from wounding the feelings of others, this worthy would be saying in an off-hand way, which he mistakes for fun, never dreaming that he was letting appear his own interior ugliness all the while, or of the disgust occasioned by it; which latter is a serious consideration. For the truth is, he does really make angry for a moment those who are taken by surprise at its manifestation, and who feel how, with all their years, which, perhaps, they never count, seeing that they cannot be stolen like money, they could beat him any day even at the sports he boasts of; so deadly angry, indeed, does he make them, that perhaps they may be caught muttering between their teeth something like "Imbécile sanguinaire!" Irrational and, no doubt, horrible words for any lips; yet used in this instance as the nearest approximation possible to the direct precise vernacular expression, equally irrational and, to our ears, still more horrible, that this sort of mental deformity suggests; the only one combination of words, in fact, in the whole vocabulary, that seems exactly to qualify the thing that causes such a disturbance of serenity; though why it should so hit it, neither those who use it nor any one else either on earth can say; instinctively, however, the not-to-be-thought-of-without-shuddering qualification rushes now to pass their ivory fence; and so all they can do is to dress in French the raw portentous English thing, thereby giving it, as it were, a sort of voucher to society; though, of course, even in that subdued form presented, it is not calculated

to enhance the serene influence which any one in that company might have been in quest of. It is a shocking state of things. But the evil lies at the door of him who provoked it by his want of the ordinary sense of mental beauty.

It is something wonderful to think in how many ways beauty of mind manifests itself; what a number of things it prevents us from uttering and doing; what miraculous promptitude belongs to it in considering what we should say and what we should not say; what words we may pronounce plainly, and what turns of expression another thought may require, in order to be presentable with grace. "He who writes for a woman," said a French author, "ought to dip his pen in the rainbow, and use for sand the dust of a butterfly's wing." In order to enjoy one of these intervals, though it were only with good fellows, you ought to have a capacity for appreciating that light touch, that transparence of tone, that same delicate refinement which characterize the interchange of thoughts where the fair and natural ones are heard conversing. You should be able to feel, in short, that there is a sweet, graceful way of doing every thing, as well as a manner that spoils and degrades all; that there are persons who can say and perform before you almost every thing without offence; while there are others, on the contrary, whose purity—one must ask pardon for speaking truth here—is indelicate, and whose cleanliness is disgusting.

The absence, again, of loud and grandiose declamation on subjects that furnish no just occasion for vehemence, must indicate the beauty of that good sense and calm which belong to minds "the quiet of whose every thought is worth a province." An old French author is obliged to remind his countrymen that Pericles used not to expend his eloquence when it was only a question of cleansing the streets, or rebuilding a wall, or taxing butcher's meat. Above all, though perhaps it is hardly necessary to say it, there must be the instinct that recoils from every indication of an irreverent and Cyclopean mind so often discernible in the men who now invoke change and doubts; as when King Robert of Sicily, in the legend related by Leigh Hunt, which that amiable author has assured me he had a peculiar fondness for, more than for any thing else in his jar of honey, would not bend a knee to heaven, but would sit twirling

his beard, and looking with something worse than indifference round about him during the gravest offices of the Church; or as when the President de Brosses goes into a church to cool himself, and sits without his coat, and his back to the altar, pretending to enjoy the stare of the peasants, who were shocked at such an apparition; or as when a young grandee, who, many years afterwards, seemed to exemplify old classic fable respecting the Furies, boasted to me that he had stood erect with his hat on while Gregory XVI. passed, bestowing his benedictions. There is no gladness in the presence of men who, like Henry Heine in his poetry, seem ashamed to have ever appeared serious or susceptible of any earnest feeling, and who end always with a loud laugh, as if mocking their company and themselves.

There remains to be noticed still a sense of another kind of beauty, which ought not to be wholly dormant or wanting in those who are to pass these intervals with us on the river or in the garden. One ought to be susceptible of the charms of sound; though it is not necessary, of course, that one should understand the crescendo, the pearled cadence, the chromatic miracles, the verbiage, the caprices, mingled with the most frank intentions, all the tributes paid by science to a few, of which the people taste nothing. There should be a capacity for appreciating, not the accidents, but the essence of genius. And this is a requisition that should offend no one as unreasonable. Fenelon extols "the arts which can render life agreeable;" and Richard of St. Victor, with St. Bonaventura—neither of whom, I suppose, will be set down as influenced by the Renaissance movement—trace all these accomplishments from a divine source. "Art and nature co-operate," says the former; "all natural operations are admirable, but so also are the works of human skill and industry, which take their beginning from them." Some would banish from the world guitars and violins, with every brass instrument, and silence even the human voice, though it might be in some dear one who could sing the savageness out of a bear.

> "Preposterous men! that never read so far
> To know the cause why music was ordain'd.

Was it not to refresh the mind of man
After his studies or his usual pain?"

"We hope a time will come," says a great author, whose authority I mean to invoke when assailed for citing penny song-books, which I confess are sometimes not alone my delight but my consolation, for there is nothing on earth so pathetic as some of them, "We hope a time will come when music will be as freely quoted in books as poetry is*." Then give me leave, since Lucentio has spoken truly in tracing the cause of this provision, to require from you a sense that can delight in harmony; and withal a due and proper familiarity with all the "novel prodigies that, each year, music, like Libya," as Anaxilas wittily says, "brings forth;" "for, my dear fellows," to use the words of one who liked such parties as ours, "music is a great and lasting treasure to all who know any thing about it; for it ameliorates the disposition and makes it gentle." Guillaume de Machaus, in a poem which the Abbé Lebeuf discovered among the manuscripts of the barefooted Carmelites in Paris, which is entitled "Remèdes de Fortune," regards music, whether wisely or not I can't just now say, as one of the remedies for the sorrows, by which I suppose he means the little daily vexations, of life†. If one were to have a philosophical conversation about music, as with the guests of Athenæus, we should hear about Pythagoras teaching that the whole universe is put and kept together by music; and we should be reminded that altogether the ancient wisdom of the Greeks was addicted to this art, which entitled its professors to the appellation of wise men. Oh! truly, as the poet sings,

"There's music in the sighing of a reed;
There's music in the gushing of a rill;
There's music in all things, if men had ears;
This earth is but an echo of the spheres."

Some sixty or seventy years ago, when there were no schools of art among us, and consequently "we were a much more moral people than at present," it was said, "our countrymen

* L. Hunt.
† Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscript. tom. xxxiv. p. 121.

have so little an inclination to music, that they seldom begin to sing till they are drunk." Those times are gone by; but there are not wanting in our age persons of very high pretensions who, after hearing

"Oh, Willie! we have missed you,"

or the "Prairie Flower," will say with Woodhamore—

"——————— I relish not your air.
That's only sweet to me that profit brings,
There is no music without golden strings."

I think you can make but little of such solid characters in the way of qualifying them for what we propose. We do not require our companion to be able to sing; it will be much if he begins to whistle in tune already, and can curry favour with the horses, though for the whistling there is never a thrush but can beat the best of them; but we do insist upon his being able to enjoy a song, whether comic or tragical, with all his senses about him, as sober as a judge. We want one who can participate with the metropolis, as Thomas Hood says, in its fondness for the song of the day, who can catch the contagion that causes Alexandrina and Augustus in the drawing-room, and Bob and "Sally in the alley" equally to delight in it, yielding, each of them, such proof that the tongue of man is born to music naturally. We want, in short, one who, if we speak too gravely and too long, as no doubt we are apt to do, will interrupt and cut us short unceremoniously, be the topic what it may, saying with Paulina,

"——— Let me have music;
This talk has made me melancholy."

Honest Izaak, who so loved the river, had often occasion to invite such interruptions, exclaiming,

"Music, miraculous rhetoric! that speak'st sense
Without a tongue, excelling eloquence;
With what ease might thy errors be excus'd,
Wert thou as truly lov'd as thou'rt abus'd?
But though dull souls neglect, and some reprove thee,
I cannot hate thee, 'cause the angels love thee."

But it is time for us to rise from this green bank, and jump into our boat. We have shown, I think, that a fourfold sense of beauty is requisite for those who would cultivate such intervals as we are at present concerned with; that there are "serene regions where dwell the pure forms" in which they should feel at home. And if, in conclusion, you ask how the absence of this sense can possibly tell directly and immediately upon your means of enjoying such intervals, there is no question more easily answered. For untouched by beauty of scenery, persons so constituted will be for rowing or walking on when you wish to stop, and for stopping when you wish to row or walk on,—blind to the reading of the countenance, they will be for rejecting a companion in whose favour you are prepossessed, and for choosing one against whom you feel a legitimate prejudice, perhaps even such as Georgette expressed when saying of Arnolphe, seen in a towering passion,—

"Et jamais je ne vis un plus hideux chrétien!"

Void of the sense of mental beauty, all their views, interpretations, and conversation will be painfully and offensively, even ludicrously, affected by the want of it. They will be moreover for slighting both grave principles and familiar traits that you adore, and possibly even for adoring in a certain way opposite principles and traits that you scorn; while being no less insensible to what is fair in manners, they will be for neglecting an occasion for some graceful action to which you feel yourself impelled, and for seizing an opportunity to do or say something against which your gorge rises; in fine, having no music in their souls, they will heed not, and even interrupt strains that "might create a soul under the ribs of death," while inviting perhaps controversies and discords that fill you with bitterness and disgust.

Well, thus we may suppose them talking together reclining on the banks, or resting from their oars in the yellow boat—

"O sweet disposal of the rural hour!
O beauties never known to cloy!
While worth and genius haunt the favour'd bower,
And every gentle breast partakes the joy."

It is time, however, that we draw them home with music. We may finish the day by describing a very simple fact in the lofty language of Homer, and say that "to our party of friends, amusing one another, dusky evening came, and that then each one found the way to his own home"—

τοῖσι δὲ τερπομένοισι μέλας ἐπὶ ἕσπερος ἦλθεν·
δὴ τότε κακκείοντες ἔβαν οἰκόνδε ἕκαστος.

CHAPTER IV.

HAT a delightful thing is a bright summer holiday! How it brings out all the human family! The fields, open to all the world, are your drawing-rooms, the high roads your domestic walks, faces the only vouchers needed. How hearts are all in tune to raise a joyous and sublime chorus that must assuredly be heard in heaven! Well, where shall we spend at least this afternoon? It shall be in Kew Gardens. Perhaps we know, or care to know, very little about plants tropical, aquatic, and so forth. There they all are, however, some like elephants' feet, some in the exact form of a Japanese parasol, such as Mr. Albert Smith opens before you, some resembling huge floating eggs,—you must excuse our similes as not having been lately upon Parnassus; but the truth is, after having wondered and admired, seeing with their eyes all rare objects, or if you will have it in Greek—

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ τάρπησαν ὀρώμενοι ὀφθαλμοῖσιν—

there are things that suit some people better still; there is reclining on the grass to watch the swan on the miniature lake—there is walking arm in arm or hand in hand, as the stature of your companions may require, under the graceful acacias and the dark cedars—there is playing, albeit, with glowing faces on

the new-mown hay, near the Chinese pagoda—there is here as every where the sport of breaking a jest like pleasant travellers upon the company you overtake—there is chatting, and listening, and feeling serene and in perfect peace with the entire universe.

But some persons that you know familiarly, you will tell us perhaps, simple soul! are not here to-day, or likely to resort to such places, or to be pleased by hearing about them when you return home. Likely enough. There is every where and at all times a certain number of people, "qui sic in domo sunt tanquam in conditorio," who, as even an old Stoic says, bury themselves in their houses. Ill-humour and avarice alone suffice to perpetuate this phenomenon. Let Shakspeare however enable you to understand all this better,—

> "I am bid forth to supper, Jessica;
> There are my keys: but wherefore should I go?
> I am not bid for love; they flatter me.
> ——————— Jessica, my girl,
> Look to my house;—I am right loth to go;
> There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,
> For I did dream of money-bags to-night.
> ——————— Hear you me, Jessica.
> Lock up my doors ——
> Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter
> My sober house,—I swear
> I have no mind of feasting forth to-night.
> But I will go.—Well, Jessica, go in;
> Perhaps I will return immediately:
> Do as I bid you.—
> Shut doors after you; fast bind, fast find;
> A proverb never stale in thrifty mind."

All that we have to say after hearing him is, that it matters very little whether he goes or not, as far as his enjoying what we mean by a serene hour is concerned.

But here's another whom we are advised perhaps to take with us—I see him trudging hither as fast as his three feet will carry up his four ages,—one that knows every thing, and the secret causes and reasons of every thing, like Polonius, saying—

"Hath there been such a time (I'd fain know that)
That I have positively said 'Tis so,
When it proved otherwise?"

These are those sage, solid characters represented so well in the old play by Sir Solitary Plot. Even by night their imaginations are stirring, as he says, about the world, this subtle world, this world of plots, and close conspiracy: there is no faith in man, nor woman, he adds, demanding in the same breath "Is my niece ready? What! so early? there may be a plot in that—yes, there may be in you too a plot; you're sent to observe me—a state spy; but I'll cozen your intelligence and be as dumb as you." There are such persons to be found from time to time, melancholy, suspicious, self-tormentors, and all their imagined plots are nothing; and pray take especial note now that these respectable wiseacres, when met together beard to beard, are always sure to be of the mind of the parish beadle, who would desire, as Peter Parley says, an act of parliament to put down along with Romanism, childhood, boyhood, girlhood, and hobbedehoyhood. Well, what can we make of persons of this character? Pleasant day we're likely to have in such company. Shall I be caught going to make one of them? No, dear sir, I think not: not if I know it. He that in this way is more than a youth is not for us.

At the risk then of meriting blame for recurring to a subject elsewhere exhausted, though here it certainly comes across us without our seeking it, what we have to infer at the beginning of this ramble is neither more nor less than this, videlicet, that another qualification requisite for the enjoyment of serene hours, is a youthful spirit—indispensable, even though we have fourscore years on our back. There must be a dash of the boy or girl still in us; and, in fact, as some one asks, did you ever meet a really clever, and we might add serene, person who had it not? I do not mean, now pray take note, that we of rougher chins should know all about "alley tors," or "commoneys," "knuckle downs," or "odd and even," terms with which a celebrated author shows himself familiar, but that we should have many traits in common with juveniles, whose lack of years should be no impediment to let them lack estimation, since

many a young body has an old head. To think really and practically of imitating their spirit would pass, I am aware, with certain legal minds, for a piece of extravagance; but for all that, it would prove, in regard to higher matters than concern us at present, an undertaking not unworthy of the longest beard and most solemn austerity. Let us confine our attention, however, strictly to what our immediate purpose demands; and if, recurring now to what one may have fallen in with elsewhere, the charge of sameness be incurred by choosing such a topic for the day, it will be sufficient answer to repeat the words of a great oratorian, saying, "Some monotonies are placid, and minister to our indolence like the plashing of a fountain*."

In the first place, however trivial the remark may appear, it clearly is very important that our pals should be agreeable, or, as the common people say, homely; men of all hours, as the Romans used to qualify good companions; that they should be cousin germans of the white hen, as the French style people who are true sons of a good mother, joyous creatures, of moderation in every thing, to whom all comes alike, rain and sunshine—to whom going is a fête, and returning a fête, who are always content, and indulgent, and considerate, and inoffensive. Obvious merit no doubt all this. Come now, don't be disagreeable—is a common entreaty where we love to haunt. For the ancients the thing implied by it had a great charm. They even thought it a subject of commemoration in elaborate works when Arcesilaus turned to a jest their want of bread at a banquet, and the wine being spoilt by the friend who improperly strained it, causing by his own good humour the mirth and joy of all present. They contrasted such manners with the general conduct of the Alexandrians, who at a feast used to fill the air with noises, and curses, and the crying of those beaten, to the discomfort and annoyance of the guests†. And even in modern times, though there are no slaves to be beaten, which perhaps for some advocates of liberty is a painful reflection, why on earth should remarks on such a subject be set down as trivial? What a thing is it, even without a ghost to account for it, to have "displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting, with most

* Faber. † Athen. x.

admired disorder?" How desirable, and philosophical, and political, and practical a thing is it for persons to please by gentleness, and humanity, and winning ways! We were made to please each other. Pretty kind of sense that would make us disdain as a triviality all talk about doing so! Well, to be as brief as possible, we see proof each hour that nature in her own wonderful way has taught all young persons who do not resist her lessons the art of being agreeable. For, as Hazlitt says, "the secret of pleasing consists in being pleased, and they are safe to be in a state of general content with all about them. In society, good temper and animal spirits are nearly every thing. They are of more importance than sallies of wit, or refinements of understanding." But this is not all in the case of the young; for instinctively and unconsciously they recoil from whatever gives offence to a refined and delicate taste. Now for these serene hours, elder people who may very possibly have forgotten this useful art must try to imitate youth in this respect, and carefully avoid those displeasing habits which they may have been acquiring in late life, perhaps, too, as professors and orators, and men of business and authority. They must attend to the least as well as to the greatest things, for one may even venture to particularize as a horrible disqualification the continental practice which Sophon of old, as Athenæus tells us, banished, but which certain pedants and others of a later school seek to perpetuate, which seems to argue in the proficient an understanding that his 'summum bonum' consists in his having a clear throat, for which object he would not hesitate to violate even sacred canons, and to disgust and insult a whole company, unless composed of such wretches as flattered the second Dionysius. Then with regard to conversation, it would be no exaggeration of the merit of youthful qualities to say, that one might learn from them, in some degree, to be able to talk like Cæsar himself, who could treat of tragic things almost in a comic way, of sad things carelessly, of serene things cheerfully, and of common things poetically, so that neither joking was excluded by the greatness of the subject, nor gravity injured by facetiousness*. Then, again, though the French say "Qui a compagnon

* De Oratore, iii.

a maître," which in a certain sense may be true, it is obvious that every one on such expeditions must be in a coming-on disposition, as Rosalind says,—not like Cicero, as Brutus described him, "never willing to follow any thing that other men begin," but by an acquiescing humour, ready to grant what is asked, in short, tractable like the young, who when called upon "Ho you! three foot and a half! boy, I say," and asked to go with us to this wood or to that garden, to pull into this creek or to make for that island, to recline on this bank or to lie under that camp-shed, will reply, not after the style of Hercules, when he refused to obey Jason, and left the company of the Argonauts, but rather with Astella, saying,

> "———— Whither you please;
> You shall not need to force me, sir; you may
> Lead me with gossamer, or the least thread
> The industrious spider weaves."

The young, in fact, who, like Walton's handsome milk-maid, have not yet attained so much wisdom as to load the mind with any fears of many things that will never be, after the fashion of a goodly number of their elders, are up to any thing, down to any thing. As Aristophon says of others—

> "For water-drinking he's a regular frog;
> For eating thyme and cabbages, a snail;
> ———— for living
> Out in the open air, a perfect blackbird;
> For standing hot, and chattering all the day,
> A second grasshopper; in wanting oil,
> He's dust; for walking barefoot in the morning,
> A crane; for flying through the night, a bat."

Above all we want not persons who are apt to take matters otherwise than is meant, and who, as Fluellen complains, will not use us with that affability as in discretion they ought to use us—being, in short, too thin-skinned, so as to be touchy and inflammable, as if each wished to be every man himself, ready on the least occasion to set up the bloody flag against all patience. We want the gentle, whatever be their social status, who have not what is called a temper, which is a bad thing in a horse, or

man, or woman; persons on the contrary we require who seem to love themselves last, who cherish the hearts that wrong them, who, as Wolsey counselled, still in their right hand carry gentle peace, to silence envious tongues, and who, whether on or off the river, seem to have chosen for their motto, "Tolle querelas."

> "And sure, I think, that quietness,
> In any man is great riches,
> In any manner of company,
> To rule or to be ruled indifferently *."

"The repose of some people's angry passions," as the Père Boutauld says, "is like the delicate slumber of a sick prince. One must speak very low, and take great precautions, and walk with much fear and circumspection in order not to awaken them." They are as surly as an old lion, and as sullen as a bullfinch. We would have peace and quietness; but the fools will not. They would die rather than they would bate one breath of their accustomed crossness. That state of things won't do for us. Though we may seem very unheroic for it, we must even protest against admitting any one with the temperament of the great Condé and his descendants; for so far as it was irritable under contradiction, such a presence would evidently spoil all. Boileau one day let out that he differed on a certain point from the great man. "Henceforth," he said, "I shall always be of the same opinion as M. le Prince, above all when he is in the wrong." We should not feel that we had compensation for exposing ourselves to inconvenience of this kind, even in such a sly and witty remark as was elicited on this particular occasion. And De Thou tells an anecdote that will show how wise is such discretion; for he says that his friend, Count Louis Diacette, had held out for a long time against his advisers, who wished him to receive into his company a certain very brave and faithful officer, Pierre Choesel de la Meuse, and that on yielding to their entreaties, he said that time would prove what reasons he had had for having so long refused them, since a man of such a temper would infallibly, sooner or later, cause some misfortune, which prophecy came true four years after, when La Meuse

* Old Play.

picked a quarrel with Diacette and killed him. De Thou, on hearing of the murder, immediately said it must have been committed by La Meuse, and when asked how he came to guess so rightly, he related what he had heard four years before*. It is advisable, therefore, that we keep clear of such "fine dashing fellows," however in other respects good-natured. Moreover, we must take every thing as it comes, and be ready to put the best face on it, as when our poor light-hearted English excursionists land for the first time at Boulogne, and though the French authorities for once in a way have behaved in a very unsatisfactory manner, yet being received by men in cocked hats, take them for generals come to do them honour. "They're a patient race," remarked some one lately of those who take excursion trains. They see others pass them; and there they sit smiling, waiting till their turn comes. Indeed, for that matter, Mirth herself says, in one of Ben Jonson's comedies, "I have a sweet tooth yet, and I will hope the best, and sit down as quiet and calm as butter, look smooth and soft as it, be merry and melt like it, laugh and please like it. I say no more but dixi." With such dispositions it will be July in December, or rather spring all the year round. It's one of our old dramatists who has left the line which is enough to make every one fall in love with the quality he commends,—

"Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubim."

What a charming thing it is to have to do with people who, like the young, and, alas! one could name those no longer seeing the light of the sun, at least as we see it, who verified the observation,—people who are not easily provoked, but ready to take all things well, and even to receive sharp reprimands with good humour, saying with the honest fellow in Shakspeare, "I am the better for my foes, and the worse for my friends; for by the former I profit in the knowledge of myself, and by the latter I am abused!" Happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them to mending! Their nature is calm as the soft air when no rude wind conspires a mutiny. This spirit must be seen in action, and let me have pardon for mentioning a pleasant

* Mém. ad an. 1589.

instance that has just occurred. A certain lad, who appears to have been richly endowed with it, being awoke by hearing a small bell, jumped up, thinking it was time for him to go to his work, but finding from consulting the clock on the stairs that it was only two in the morning, instead of acting as your rich elderly gentleman would have done, vowing to write a letter to the "Times," or perhaps to institute legal proceedings against the poor men lately arrived in that suburb, for allowing their call to matins to transpire, he felt quite happy that he had so many more hours to sleep; and without troubling himself by even wondering at the strange hours observed by his new neighbours, he just very quietly and good-humouredly got into bed again. Now, in a general way, this is the style of character for us; and we cannot dispense with it. For the enjoyment of such hours we must again be able to bear raillery, understanding, of course, that kind involving rather a praise of the person against whom it is aimed than a censure, which is practised by persons of good nature and good breeding, however natural, where conversation is lively, embracing both what is grave and what is gay. In fact, young people's raillery is that kind in which the French used to excel, as Swift reports when saying,

> "Voiture, in various lights, displays
> That irony which turns to praise;
> His genius first found out the rule
> For an obliging ridicule;
> He flatters with peculiar air
> The brave, the witty, and the fair;
> And fools would fancy he intends
> A satire where he most commends."

It does not, however, utterly exclude your "quip," which, as old authors say, writing in days of good humour, when a little sharpness was thought acceptable, "is a short saying of a sharp wit, with a bitter sense in a sweet word." Speaking of such mirth, the Père Boutauld compares it to the play of dogs, and most other animals. "When they play together and fight for amusement, you would think," he says, "that they were going to bite each other to the bowels. They are only pleasing each other. They govern their teeth and their claws with a wonder-

ful address; nothing enters the skin." Yet there are some men whom even the most refined raillery offends. Play with an ass, say the Spaniards, and he will hit you across the face with his tail. This sort of company in either sex we beg to deprecate. "I must be so bold to say," writes Swift, "that people in Ireland, which Spenser calls the land of ire, do very ill understand raillery. I can rally much safer here with a great minister of state or a duchess than I durst do there with an attorney or his wife." From that disposition to take offence, whoever possesses it, we must therefore be as free as the veriest juvenile, which is another point in proof of our proposition. Then, too, of aptitude for fun in general, it is not too much to demand some slight portion as being highly desirable on occasions of this kind. Oh, it is much that a jest will do with a fellow that never had the ache in his shoulders! and truly it is hard not to believe that the light-hearted, light-conscienced laugh of young people is music for the angels. We want some one, as far as this capacity is concerned, like the youth Fuscus Salinator, of whom Pliny, when congratulating Servianus that he is to have him for son-in-law, says, "studious, learned, and eloquent, he unites with all the innocence of a child, the sprightliness of a boy to the wisdom of age."

Moreover, I think it obvious, too, that for our countrymen at least some little skill in manly exercises that afford a cheap and innocent amusement for the boy population is necessary, not so much for the reasons alleged by our old Peachum when recommending the exercises of running, leaping, and swimming *, as for the homelier one that a total want in this respect would indicate the absence of elements more essential than what was denied to him who complained that he was as subject to heat as butter; a man of continual dissolution and thaw. Caligula would not have been eligible to make one of our brotherhood, if it were only for what Suetonius reports of him, saying, "natare nescit,"—that is, of course, understanding the words in a general way as typical, though for the reality there is somewhat to be said too; for it was a good idea to send the gold-loving worldling to plunge into a river's head to be cured of his infatuation, since

* The Compleat Gentleman, p. 258.

it is difficult to be very stuck-up while swimming; and it is the same with other manly sports that interfere with the exercise of a bad or spoiled disposition. During expeditions of this kind proper young men, of excellent growth and presence, ought to be all of the opinion of the son of Alcinous, that a man can gain no greater glory than by what he can do with his feet and hands. For your light-foot friend is often wanted, or at least some one who, when he fails to be the first at the goal, will only verify the words of the philosopher respecting the victor who carried off the cup, "velocitate alium, non animo, antecessit*." In fact, you yourself, with a feeling of conscious dignity, arising from a sense of skill in regard to both which you cannot altogether hide, help people in and out of the boat, and, with an air of legitimate authority that no one thinks of disputing, settle in what place each shall sit or lie down during the voyage. What a thing it would be if instead of all this ability, and the consciousness of it, you were to make one of such a raw parcel of unskilful boys as a famous author describes —a regular Sunday water-party from Lambeth! Just hear what he says. "At length, after a great deal of changing and fidgeting consequent upon the election of a stroke-oar, the inability of one gentleman to pull on this side, of another to pull on that, and of a third to pull at all, the boat's crew are seated. Immediately she turns round in a contrary direction from that in which we expected to steer, amidst such a splashing and struggling as never was seen before except when the 'Royal George' went down. 'Back water, sir, you, sir, aft,' cries the steerer, upon which, every body thinking he must be the individual referred to, they all back water, and back comes the boat. 'Pull round, you, sir, for'ard, can't you?' 'Pull round, Tom, can't you?' re-echoes one of the party. 'Tom ain't for'ard,' replies another. 'Yes, he is,' cries a third." This makes poor work of it. Just look at the doctor's face as he sits grinning at them all from his cushion. I hope, as the player says, "we have reformed that indifferently with us. O we must reform it altogether." By the way, though to notice it is to be shockingly discursive, having thus named the doctor, who hap-

* Seneca, de Beneficiis, lib. v.

pens to be a particular friend to many of us, and he too actually comes from the Borough, I must insinuate a little of our learning, and inform you that it is an old fancy of the English this, to call eminent priests, and even bishops, doctors. When the king of England sent a deputation to Louis XI., there was amongst them, says Philippe de Commines, "un docteur appellé Morton." The good doctor was neither more nor less than the lord high chancellor and archbishop of Canterbury. I just make this digression to correct any mistake you might have fallen into respecting the limits that you might have thought imposed on us in regard to our company on occasions of this kind. We shall see later that no such doctors are ineligible. But to return. As boats are now constructed, apparently to suit such as are not an eagle's talon in the waist, and can creep through any alderman's thumb-ring, some very desirable companion may find himself a tight fit in one of them, though I promise you no one will grow as fat as an otter in our service. But, I repeat it, he must have skill also as well as heroic energy. He ought to be the quick-of-hand, as Theocritus says, and with palms made callous by the oar, about as tender as the foot of a good roadster. He must be able to row his friends without any risk of giving them an untimely end near the bridges; as when, in "the city match," the two old gentlemen took hold of one another and sunk together: for people are often invited who have a keen and bitter sense of being liable to lose their "shequilimbrium," as our friend the nigger says, and who, in that event, if the bottom were as deep as hell, should down. It will be for his own advantage if he can swim well and jump well; but if deficient in regard to such things, it is indispensable that he should be good-natured enough to follow a leader over wet and dry, however sure to fall in up to his neck. It won't spoil his relish for Virgil if he should have in the same pocket the "Oarsman's Guide to the Thames," and its companion by members of the Leander Club, which remark, wholly disinterested, is not to be set down as worthy of a place in advertising literature. In a word, for all youthful sports he must be willing, apt, and high-spirited, however in regard to worldly matters of all sorts and sizes, as witty girls are apt to say, an easily frightened thing.

Then, again, we have to insist a little on some points concerned with demeanour. What youthful trait is this to indicate? "These London boys are very singular beings," said a staid and respectable old Frenchman, who was quite a mirror of the ancient school in regard to politeness, after watching a company of them one day in the street. "Voyez vous," he added, "ils se maltraitent et ils restent amis." They might certainly remind one sometimes of the words interchanged in the old play of Green's "Tu Quoque,"—

> "Is he your acquaintance?
> O, very familiar; he struck me a
> Box o' the ear once, and from thence
> Grew my love to him."

On the other hand, perhaps, our companions would regard as very singular the kind of behaviour that the good foreigner was more accustomed and delighted to witness, which rather resembled that of the massa of the negro's ball, who bowed so low that he was never able afterwards to stand upright. "Here's a million of manners," cries Speed on seeing a certain formal ceremonious individual moving before him like a device stirred by a wire, or like some grave clock wound up to a regular pace. Biron exclaims, on meeting another of the same cut,—

> "Behaviour! what wert thou, till this man show'd thee?"

In the "Lady's Travels into Spain" we are told by her that there if a cobbler's apprentice should present an old shoe to his master, he must do it with knee upon the ground. We may conceive what behaviour requires in that country from one of better condition. The Duc de Saint-Simon, describing the President Harlay, brings before us a person whose character would not have suited our habits. He who treated his own son as a negro, used to speak to him with ceremonious politeness. Living always in the same house, they used to write letters to each other from one room to another. Whenever the son made his appearance, the father would rise with hat in hand, order a chair to be brought to Monsieur, and would be seated only at the same moment when the other sat down. On the son's going away, the president used to rise and show him reverence. The

Duchesse de la Ferté, seeing him escort her to her carriage in profound silence, and with great respect, and his eyes cast down, as was his custom when he wanted to get rid of people he disliked, would have killed him though she had to die herself for it the next minute *. There are persons who have an acquired grace, a false grace, a way of walking and sitting down and saluting others, of picking up a glove and holding a fork, and presenting an object which is all factitious or a mimicking. What would such grace avail them without their servants to stand them in place of arms and hands and limbs? Nothing can be more ridiculous or unpleasant. "I declare," continues a celebrated Frenchwoman, "that I prefer to it an hundred times a common workman handling his tools, a washerwoman raising her basket on her head, a child tumbling over head and heels with companions. To please me people must be natural; for as to what is false and put on, I have an antipathy to it, and I can detect it even when artfulness clothes it with the surface of an affected simplicity. The older I grow the more do I require, above all things, in the human character, works of intelligence, and in all acts of social life what is true and simple, without which condition there is nothing for me either good or fair." Rudeness, even in our puppies without tails, is here of course thought to belong only to the fabulous ages, the time that Ruskin speaks of "coming sooner now than ever in the life of a youth when he can sit even at a writing-table without wanting to throw the inkstand at his neighbour." We have no transatlantic ways here, or rude despisers of good manners, who after a peremptory fashion still huff it, with a kind of carriage as void of wit as of humanity; though on the other hand, as already acknowledged, one may hear sometimes the merry, quick, and voluble retort made in frolic such as "Knock who down? Pick who up? Bully who? Of course what? What's that you say?" Not much ceremony with him, ill-school'd in boulted language; meal and bran together he throws without distinction. But this sort of reverential antagonism to rudeness will not answer our purposes; for though it is true we often have on board our complimental youth that might think himself at times a spruce

* Tom. v. 383.

and expert courtier, it still is in a way that does not savour of any servile imitation of their elders. You who would teach them the latter may spare the labour. They'll never thank you for't. They'll not endure a ceremony that is not their own, belonging either to stroke or cockswain, or, as the text hath it, to child or mother, lord or beggar. The fact is, we want natural characters whose very anger, like that of the Maréchal d'Humières, is agreeable, causing only playful fits that make every one love him the more, as Saint-Simon says*. For it is with manners as with languages; and Rivarol remarks that the monotony of the Italian arises from the ear getting fatigued with its sweetness, each word being harmonious in itself, and consequently the harmony of the whole becoming insipid. In demeanour, therefore, a gentle purpose admits often of very rough details, such as we like to be familiar with on the river or wherever we go, while this smooth measured regularity, on the contrary, only dictates such reproof as

> "———— Nay, my lords, ceremony
> Was but devised at first to set a gloss
> On faint deeds, hollow welcomes,
> Recanting goodness, sorry ere 'tis shown."

'Tis Timon says it. But please, goodman gravity, note it down as evidence on oath that though we prefer young people's way of going to most things, as to oysters, without ceremony or saying grace, it is not from the notion that devotion would spoil all; so you must try to put some other construction on it. If you are a stickler for dignity and etiquette, that cons state with book, and as arch Maria says, "utters it by great swarths,"—if you are the sworn interpreter of regularity, and for taking with you on all occasions Le Cérémonial de France in two folio volumes,—though your case seems desperate, you may be reconciled to our freedom, perhaps, on hearing that "Le chapeau, Messieurs!" or, as we should say with Hamlet,

> "Your cap to its right use, 'tis for the head,"

was the formula used by Louis XIV., addressing his courtiers

* Tom. i.

when they went on an excursion of pleasure, to signify that every one was to be covered without ceremony, when the king would have taken it very ill of any one who should even delay for an instant putting on his hat*. You should be reminded too of the reply of Monsieur de Joyeuse to the first president of the parliament of Toulouse on the day when he was out hunting, and met him on the road with all the learned body, and, riding up to salute them, accompanied the president without seeming to heed on which side of him he rode, whereupon that stately personage said, "Pray, sir, take your rank;" to whom he then replied, "Monsieur, I take no rank when I am in the country; but be sure to maintain yours when there is occasion for it†." We might as well remark by the way that our river manners in this respect are more in keeping after all with the ancient style of good company than with what took its place in later times. "People about me," said Napoleon on one occasion, alluding to the latter, "are too much given to flattery. I am beset with it. Would you believe it? In order not to be flattered even in bivouac, I have been forced to take for aide-de-camp a courtier, a sensible man of the old court‡." Of course, there was even there much to complain of on this score; but then it was noticed at the time, and complained of. Mæcenas must have been a right good fellow to live as he did with the least of his friends, and to allow them to treat him with such liberty. When Horace writes to him he calls him "My friend," or "Friend Mæcenas," or "Dear Mæcenas." "Just imagine," says Balzac, "a poet in our times beginning with 'Dear Richelieu,' or 'Dear friend Richelieu;' what would be thought of such epistles at Rüel?" That might have been a question on the Seine, but here on the Thames such familiarity must be the only form of friendship known, let who will be in the boat with us. On the other hand, a man should be able to say all the while, like a boy, with Job, "Si simplex fuero hoc ipsum ignorabit anima mea;" for the least trace of the thing being studied, and only put on, would spoil all. To enjoy these intervals we want to have around us those gay faces, those regular children, those bursts of laughing,

* St.-Simon, xiii. 94.
† Brantome, tom. iv. 85.
‡ M. de Narbonne. Villemain, Souvenirs contemporains, tom. i. 170.

those shouts, those games that can make us feel ourselves young again, not those sickly walks or mournful reveries, or mature ways of nourishing an interior chagrin or a worldly tediousness. To enjoy these hours one ought to have the spirit of youth also, and, above all, in regard to setting very little by what is thought dignity when it is a question of kindness or justice, as indeed of every thing else. "I read lately, with a kind of indignation," says Balzac, "a letter of Giberti, bishop of Verona, objecting to the desire of Pope Clement VII. to reconcile Bohemia with the Holy See, on the ground that it did not suit the dignity of the Church to be the first to propose such a thing, but that if the Bohemians made advances, it might be granted. Was not this," he asks, "a stickler for etiquette or the point of honour?" Then he adds, in that quiet way which indicates how well he was cut out for being one of a serene party on the river, "This advice displeased me coming from Giberti, who was an excellent man." This way of looking at things, of which Balzac is so worthy an example, will be required even to guide conversation; and if it animate our friends in their grave pursuits when we separate, supposing them to be mighty scribblers before the public, there will be no injury to even their literary reputation, as many instances might be cited in proof. Tacitus, forsooth, thinks it beneath his dignity as historian to give the last words of Seneca. "On such an occasion," says Balzac, "I would not be as stately as he; I would not cling so tight to the gravity of a regular historian as to fear being mistaken for the notary of a dying sage. We should sacrifice style to the desire of relating what is full of interest, and which can even instruct posterity*." In general there are a thousand reasons why this kind of youthful spirit should be required with an especial view to the tone of conversation during such intervals as involve the thorough enjoyment of a serene hour. We don't want persons who merit the reproof of Dryden,

"Mature in dulness from his tender years,"

or the raillery of Balzac on one occasion when saying to a friend, "This must be done in a more decent dress. I am of

* Balzac, Lettres.

opinion that for this purpose you should put on your long robe and square cap, without forgetting your venerable spectacles, with which you could even deliver sermons, and affirm that it is so or not so, after the manner of doctors of Coimbra and Salamanca." We don't want one, whether male or female, who, as Fastidious Brisk says, "does observe as pure a phrase, and use as choice figures in ordinary conferences, as any be in the Arcadia." Though you were "doctissimus togatorum," you must, unlike the pedant in the comedy, have both ears at the disposal of all who use the vulgar and maternal language, and who speak with the tongue that they have in their own mouth without having to borrow one from another's. You must not be like the academician who found fault with Duclos for using words that he said were not in the dictionary. "I laughed heartily at your fine phrases," said a French mother to her "highly educated" daughter on being shown one of her grand girlish compositions that affected great literary ability; "but," she continued, "I hope you don't intend to practise talking like that." No, truly, such a style would not suit us either. Your talk for the nonce must not resemble that of Pancrace, the philosopher of Molière, or that described by a certain Italian who had been in Poland, and who said that the conversation of ladies in that country had often occasioned him a severe cold; but it ought to be that of one like the old poet, "of whom, having said that he delighted in the young, you will truthfully describe the whole man." It ought not even to be carried on by means of the lips alone. Eyes, feet, arms, and hands must know how to talk, or at least to join in. "So you too want to be broiled, I'm overdone already," said some one to a couple of merry-looking boys as they climbed upon the roof of the carriage which was taking him to Twickenham, where he meant to have a swim, on a fine day in June. Not a word followed. Neither of them answered with the tongue; but they both simultaneously, as if about to strike a dog, placed the palms of their hands heavily on his shoulders so as to startle him, when, after leaving the said palms there a moment, one of them said, laughing, "Well, I see you are roasted." You can judge pretty well from this prelude what was the style of conversation that ensued when tongues took to it. But so it should always be on

these occasions. It ought to resemble that ingenuous chat which drew from Mr. Trevanion the imprudent commendation which defeated his object: "Talk, my young friend, talk; I like to hear you talk, it refreshes me. Nobody has talked naturally to me these last ten years." Oh, give me back "dulce loqui!" give me back "ridere decorum!" Alas, alas! some one perhaps will say, you ask then to give you back my sons! "Languages," as the Cardinal du Perron said, "begin with childish simplicity, and are lost by affectation." The talk here must be like young people's talk,—like young men's talk, filled with innocent gallantry and truth,—like young women's talk,—like that even of the common people,—"disengaged from all the protocols," as Rivarol says, "which servility invents for the vanity and weakness of the great world,"—natural, strong, expressive, and having, as he adds, speaking of the French, "probity attached to its genius,"—inapt for being employed in "sowing war with the words of peace,"—its matter too very often as juvenile as its form,—no great debates, no crotchets, eloquently maintained, no pedantic discussions on useful matters,—no tacit shrug or shrink, or other parerga, for the use of those that tread the paths of public business which seculars understand not; but all the words, fresh, gay, impulsive, and pleasant with innocence, ready for any thing, requiring no great events or objects to elicit them; but finding enough in a flower, or a bulrush, or some cows watering, escaping from your boat as it dashes through them. "The meeting or collision of tongues with young people," says a great author, "has that peculiar property that you never can foresee the spark or divine the flash." What next? You can't tell. Laughter springs out of tenderness; a sigh from what seems pleasant. One moment all for fun, the next quite grave and serious. The impulse rises out of the first word that escapes. The humour of each is sovereign. The least thing suffices to open a fresh field for what is unexpected. It is a way of conversing full of fits and starts, in which the scenery is shifted all at once, as if chance were behind to move it all, the general tone being light, easy, and natural, yet, if there should be occasion, edifying and to the point, however grave that point may be. "Louise de Soulanges," says M. de Sacy, reviewing the tale of M. Delécluse,

"might have been converted to religion from her indifference or incredulity, I can't help thinking, by two or three little conversations with her betrothed, young Lebis, even after the curé and the great theologian had both failed with her. I am quite serious. I know a very learned and religious personage who, whenever he met any of these obstinate sceptics, used to attack them by the heart, and advise them very gravely to read some passionate romance of life*."

Then, again, we want people for these intervals who are also of an affectionate disposition, like the young, and who are even somewhat enthusiastic; who, as Madame Geoffrin used to recommend, "will not let the grass grow on the road of friendship." How that road gets choked up with weeds and brushwood when this spirit is not present to keep it open! In London, even, how it gets overgrown and lost! They pretend it is the local distance that is in fault there. What say you to that, ye knights of old, Palmerin of England, Primaleon, and all you other glorious companions, who at one time travelled over the whole of Europe in great sorrow because you had no tidings for a short while of one of your friends, Don Duardos, the ocean and Mediterranean having even scattered the entire navy of Constantinople in search of him?—Local distance, indeed! Not a bit of it; the cause is that in certain circles minds are not young, that hearts are distant. Each one is as cold as the rope of a well. I doubt you will find the entrance to his familiarity somewhat more than difficult. To be sure, your juvenile is of a loving nature. Who could fancy that the oldest thing some one remembered was crying in bed one morning to hear the rain, because father was going to set out on a journey of some forty miles? That is a fine trait in the character of the fast youth Juba, in the tale of Callista, when, after talking with Agellius the Christian, he hears, in other company, the Christians abused, and says, ironically, "Thank you in the name of the Christians;" just as if he were already one of them himself. Yes; most people have known lads who, like him, felt impelled to defend the absent. One needs their spirit for serene hours. When any bitterness arises one needs the beardless censor, saying,

* De Sacy, Variétés littéraires, 206.

"I prithee leave this humour, 'tis not generous." Fervour, too, in regard to general things, we want; that virtue which, as Chaucer says, "maketh folk undertake hard and grievous things by their own will, wilfully and reasonably." It won't do to have for associate on these occasions a fellow like Pitt, "all bone and will," or an apathist by nature or from principle, or one like the Dr. Strauss, perhaps made up of both—not a trace of passion in him; he is dry and calm enough to appal you. M. de Sacy says that "the thunders of ancient apologetic eloquence can do nothing to a man so phlegmatic." What is more to our immediate purpose is, that the intervals we are for enjoying can have no attraction for him. What a frosty-spirited rogue is this! His calm is a very different thing from the serenity of which we are speaking; which even requires a heart like that described by Stahl, and ascribed peculiarly to youth in these words, "Happy age! when every thing, if you will, is enthusiasm, passion, folly, and childish enchantment; and on which reason, which is often only another word for indifference, has never placed its icy fingers. Happy age! when evil itself has something of innocence, when faults are only errors, when fruits are bitter only from being unripe, when one feels so thoroughly, though one may not know it, that endurance itself is not an evil, and that, as Montaigne says, 'it holds to pleasure by one end.'"

Further, we can't dispense altogether with the magnanimous spirit of the young, and what that is I leave to the readers of the Seven Champions of Christendom to find out. We want to have with us that "wit ever wakeful," to use the words of Coleridge, speaking of Mercutio, but as if describing one whose recent loss we mourn for, "that courage in an easy mind which, without cares of its own, is at once disposed to laugh away those of others, and yet to be interested in them*." Indeed, youth's cares are nothing; they are like your cap, soon put on and as soon put off. "Have I not my soul in my body?" asked Preciosa, with an indignant air. "Ain't I fifteen?" With such spirits it is, as with our German forefathers, "fortunam inter dubia, virtutem inter certa numerare." Now there are plenty of occasions on

* Lit. Rem. ii.

the river, as in the woods, when, for a million of reasons, in order to be serene, we want "chivalry without its armour." We want to feel that, if need for it should arise, we can command still "the swell of the old clarion, the wind of the Paladin's horn, which woke Fontarabian echoes*." This comprises a great deal of which the world seems to be now threatened with the loss. It comprises that spirit, for instance, which is ascribed to Huon of Bordeaux, when finding his dreadful enemy the giant asleep, he exclaims, "Ja, à Dieu ne plaise qu'en nul lieu me soit reproché, que je l'aye tué que premierement, je ne l'aye diffié." He will not attack him until he is not only awake, but fully armed. These old-fashioned romantic ways are all to be held in honour where we haunt. Elsewhere, perhaps, we hear a different sort of dialogue, and such as the ancients deprecated, saying,

> "With his claw the snake surprising,
> Thus the crab kept moralizing:
> 'Out on sidelong turns and graces!
> Straight's the word for honest paces†.'"

Such lessons are not for those seeking places in the circle of serene hours; but, of course, there are other posts and positions that their foxships more desiderate. The suspicious turn of mind is altogether opposed to the spirit of our proceedings. Indeed, Philippe de Commines thinks it an attribute only of those whom no one will ever suspect of having, in former ages at least, pulled much on the Thames; for he says, "Les grands princes sont beaucoup plus supçoneux qu'autres gens," in consequence, he adds, of the doubts and reports which they are furnished with, and that too very often through flattery, without there being any cause for them‡. His remark elsewhere on the same subject is however of more importance to us; for he says, "If I were to write down all the sufferings and passions of the great whom I have known, both men and women, only for the last thirty years, I should make a very thick book; and the greatest part of all this suffering was founded on suspicion, which is a secret malady that reigns in the houses of great

* P. Caxton. † Sandford. ‡ Liv. i. c. 5.

princes *." It is pretty clear, then, that such a disposition, with all its shrewd cleverness, would be fatal to our general purposes; and in fact it is the temper which is exactly contrary to it that we must require from those who are to come on board with us. In this respect, therefore, we want the swells, being remiss, most generous, and free from all contriving; so pray make room for them, ushering them in, if you please, with a line of Macaronic poetry, and saying with old Drummond of Hawthornden, who first introduced it into our island,

"Filius eldestus jollyboyus, valde stalvartus."

I wish I could see again some of them whose place, alas! is vacant, who had no more forecast than a squirrel, and had less wise consideration about them. In regard to generosity, too, we want them; for it is not they, or those that like their company, who "strive to play the good Samaritan without the oil and twopence," as a witty author phrased it; and every where we meet with occasions where their reply, like Hamlet's to some Polonius, saying, "Use them according to their desert," will be very instructive to us, and conducive to our day's serenity. "Odd's bodikins, man, much better; use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity; the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty." For ourselves, on the contrary, if we would not spoil all, and turn a party of pleasure into a party of bitterness, we must be ready on small occasions such as are likely to present themselves to us, not to claim, but to give up undoubted rights, agreeing with Balzac, who says that "in this queer world where we live, when justice is done us we should consider it a favour." To be sure, at least on business days, modern ideas of remuneration for public services are rather different from those of such going-out-for-the-day people, as well as from those of classical antiquity, when Athens gave only two laurel branches to him who delivered her from thirty tyrants. All this lofty-mindedness, however, I admit may entail upon us the need of witnessing a little harmless pretension. We shall have some one whose face is not a hair amiss yet; out of which a barber

* Liv. viii. c. 13.

shall never earn sixpence; and yet, as saith the old play, "he will be crowing as if he had writ 'man' ever since his father was a bachelor." But we need the disposition to hope which belongs to such a character. It was well for us when, as Ferdinand says to Rosania,

> "we could trust
> To all our promises, when we did flatter
> Ourselves, and in our fancy took the world
> O' pieces, and collected what did like
> Us best, to make us a new paradise."

Under Louis XV., society even then retaining many of the old generous characters like those of youth, a minister was disgraced. The next morning the king on leaving his chamber found the rooms empty, and asked a servant, "Whither is the court gone?" "Sire," he replied, "it is gone to Chanteloup." Chanteloup was the country house of the fallen minister, forty leagues from Versailles. "At that day, gentlemen," says Lacordaire, "people would go forty leagues to visit a fallen minister. There are times when one would not take four steps for such a purpose." "Is there no trick," Sebastian demands, "to give a man a spirit?" Yes; and I think an acquaintance with youth can yield it. These invocations in generous moments, though in madcap terms, to suffer any thing most mystically portentous, rather than act dishonourably; this throwing to the winds all selfish, narrow policy; and this giving sentence with so much confidence, like a boy; all this, which is of such admirable service as entering into the composition of a great character, bespeaks, in fact, qualities for every-day use, by means of which any slip of a fellow can, on a small scale, reap that secret exultation of conscience which, without spoiling his self-slight, makes a sort of demi-god of him, and completes the joy of a serene hour.

There must not be, again, the over-prudent disposition, such as belongs to those who, for their quietness, do apprehend nothing but earthquakes; or who resemble Ariosto's suspicious wretch, feeling himself "the less safe the more armour he puts on," and calling out dismally from his tower a thousand feet high to the watchers and warders below, to see that all is

secure. When Randolph's Deilus says, "Now I fear every thing," Colax says to him aside,—

> "'Tis your discretion. Every thing has danger,
> And therefore every thing is to be feared."

We have no such flatterers to back up any one in this way. We do not, indeed, mean that every one should resemble M. de Longueville, who, in regard to great and public events, would merit the reproof of Cardinal de Retz, saying, that "he was of all the world the man who liked best the commencement of all things." But neither do we hold it advisable to be constantly within hearing of an alarm-bell. There are persons who seem to live on alarms; there are many persons disqualified for engaging in our sort of enterprises, for the reason, that in matters of every-day life they too much resemble Ulysses in this one respect, that their knees are ever dissolving and their dear hearts. Of course they are not cowards, but, as M. Thiers said, "they see dangers every where." When, for instance, my spruce companion, you have drawn up your smart boat to receive them, and all things are ready, having washed it out clean and dried with the mop its slight untimber'd sides, spread the cushion, and made all so nice and neat and comfortable, they will step a few paces back, and shuddering exclaim, like Mascarelle on hearing of the fearful oak bludgeon that is to be laid on somebody's shoulders, "Mais, pour qui, je vous prie, un tel préparatif?" "Good lad," they cry with Theocritus, "be careful of your life, nor be a navigator out of season, since life is not long to a man. Be not like him who, crossing the ocean stream about the setting of the Pleiad, went down with the Pleiad. Is there no way to cross the river by land? O the situation! the horrible situation! And such a saucy boat, a toast for the Naiads! Why not one of nobler bulk?" They could not tremble more if you had been of the College of the Utricularians, and had asked them to cross the Rhone on bladders*. There are Stratonicuses near the Thames, as elsewhere, indeed, for that matter, who being asked which is the safer kind of vessel, the long one or the round one, will reply, "Those

* Papon, Hist. de Prov. i. 12.

are safest which are laid up in the boat-house*." River expeditions, feats in the venturesome line, and a thousand other results that can be traced to a dash of youth, in your thirty miles a day lads, are often required to bring some people to their wits; as in the instance suggested by Jacinta, when she says of Sir Solitary Plot,

> "This fright may work some good effect upon him.
> Many men have been frighted from their wits;
> Having none left, why, is't not possible
> He should be frighted back again into 'em?"

Alas! I knew one well skilled to cure maladies of that kind if vincible by such art. Some people can find in the Thames, where it is shallowest, unless their boat be some great big Beelzebub of a thing, dangers sufficient to revive the memory of Scylla and Charybdis; though, as I heard a little girl once say, contrasting it with the sea, "you feel quite at ease upon it, as you can't be lost; for there's the bank on both sides of you."

Then, again, what sanitary caution in some persons! what rules for health! what sober robes, what sables and what weeds importing fear and graveness! As Montaigne says, they "wear their furred cloak from St. John the Baptist's day, because they will want it at Christmas." They dread the very air if a room is not hermetically sealed up. "If I live much longer in the king's chamber," said Madame de Maintenon to the Duc de Noailles, "I shall become paralytic. There is neither door nor window that shuts. One is blown on by a wind which reminds me of the hurricanes of America." Such uneasy people are not like Cowley, asking,

> "What need there here repeated be by me
> The vast and barbarous lexicon
> Of man's infirmity?"

They think it very important to know that dictionary—swelled as it is every year with new horrible names—by heart. And yet the result is, after all, that the most prudent have to pass by the way that all others have passed, as Philippe de Commines says of Louis XI.

* Athen. viii.

"Frustra per autumnos nocentem
Corporibus metuemus Austrum."

I certainly smiled once to hear a lad, while many were complaining of them, extol the hot sun and the north-east wind, for the reason that the latter "kept us so fresh." And on one occasion, at least, I did not give my vote to a young companion who proposed sleeping in a barge moored in the stream above Hampton, which he would have preferred to the finest hotel of Richmond, for the reason that it would be so country-like, awaking next morning and seeing the sun rise from the water; but though not in the humour for it just then, the idea was a sensible one; and many a night his Mentor had passed that way himself in the fens of Cambridgeshire. The fact is, that the spirit we require is better even for the body than many comforters and à fortiori potions; from which latter, indeed, physicians themselves, such as old Gui Paten, will now seek to deliver us, as things that belong to "the tyranny of those Arabesque cooks" who bear the title of apothecaries. "The most sovereign prescription in Galen is but empiricutic, and, to this preservative, of no better report than a horse-drench." As for other matters, "let this perpetual subtlety and ceaseless reasoning learn," says Balzac, "that it is prudence itself which warns us from always following its counsels. She dispenses us at times from things that she orders at another. Without offending her, we can strike across the fields where there is danger right and left, and try if an excess cannot cure us when remedies have failed. One can be imprudent with the consent of prudence. One must not be always so regular and methodical. We must risk sometimes to be happy."

Another qualification absolutely necessary, which we shall dilate on later, is, in my humble opinion, as one having a personal interest in the matter, the being not over knowing. Who would have thought that serene hours required so many qualities? They do, though; and this last, perhaps, is the hardest of all to find, though perhaps, in the great heap of your knowledge, your only reply to me will be the taunt of the yellow Menelaus,

—— νῦν γε, παῖς ὥς, νήπια βάζεις,

There's many a man hath more hair than wit. Here is one of the great liberal party far advanced in the knowledge of those principles which are to efface in the social, political, and artistic order of the world, all visible traces of the ancient faith of Christendom. Well, all we have to say is, that he is not youthful enough to suit our company. It is men of this kind, as some one says of the French Revolution, that "introduced crabbed old age into the human society." Here is a diplomatic doctor who has got by heart five or six sentences of Tacitus, to advance them a hundred times a day on all subjects. He recommends every one to practise secrecy and dissimulation. This lesson learned, they make a mystery of every thing, and only explain themselves by winks and movements of the head. The master and pupils had best not trouble us on these occasions with their venerable company. We will only refer them to that passage in the philosophical letters of the great Chancellor d'Aguesau, where he says, "What I generally do on such occasions, when matters of this kind are proposed, is not to think at all; and I am almost tempted to write a treatise on distractions, or rather, on the great art of thinking of nothing in regard to what passes in the world *." Here is another from the inns of court, who, in order to show how knowing he is, can repeat you all the maxims of De la Rochefoucald. But if, as De Sacy says, this book, in spite of the perfection of the style, the ingenuity and depth of the thoughts, can make no man feel happy, neither can the company of its cordial admirer be exactly the thing for us. De Sacy describes the confused feeling of repugnance, the instinct of aversion stronger than himself, the utter disgust and detestation with which he reads it. Who could spend in serenity a beautiful evening with a companion whose mind was formed from such a type?

> "Scilicet ingenium, et rerum prudentia velox
> Ante pilos venit †."

The genius and prudence proper for these occasions, like that of the young, is not, you may depend upon it, of the kind that he disliked. "Perhaps it is my misfortune," says M. de Sacy,

* Lett. 26. † Pers. iv.

"but in spite of myself, and from an instinct I cannot control, the book that I always choose in a library is one of those that children know by heart—a Corneille, a Racine, a La Fontaine, or a Bossuet." I wish he had pleaded guilty also to a relish, on the sly, for your good nursery tale, such as still pleases London at Christmas time. It is wits, at all events, formed by such masters, or at least not spoiled by converse with their opposites, that constitute the proper companions for these hours. "You might think," he says elsewhere, "that the good Rollin wrote for an age of innocence. His book will always please, precisely because he intended it for the young." When we go out for the day, we don't want to be disturbed by knowing all the new, and startling, and paradoxical propositions which tend to cast doubt on all things. And when we return home, we are not the less wise for this abstinence in the way of erudition. These clever men would be for unsettling all our notions of antiquity, forsooth; "and yet the more we have had means to verify the old historians," says M. de Sacy, "the more exact we have found their descriptions and recitals. From how many calumnies about writing merely from imagination, has our expedition to Egypt freed Herodotus! How many things in his admirable picture of that ancient country, which passed for fables, have been found to turn out simple truth, as well seized as expressed! Let us leave geometers and algebraists to turn history into Pyrrhonism. Let us not have the air of giving them the victory in borrowing their method. History is not true as an axiom is true; no, nor a past fact certain as is certain a fact of anatomy or physics, which with good eyes or good glasses one can see every moment. History will never have any thing but the truth of a remembrance; that has not prevented, and never will prevent, the human race from having faith in it, and preferring the immortal pages of Thucydides and Tacitus to all the A plus B's of the world."

But what is more than all this, as we shall show more fully on a future occasion, in these calm moments of enjoyment we must have companionship with those humble thoughts, congenial to the young, that are immoveably fixed on the great principles which shed peace at all times and in all places on the human heart. Experience proves, for instance, says De Sacy, that

the idea of God, however confused, penetrates with an extreme facility into the intelligence of children. The same observation is applicable here to those who, like the young, in moments of repose have no self-deceit. We want that which he regards as a remedy for many evils, the letting alone for a while general ideas about the world and humanity, and the being occupied with what comes from the heart. By dint of generalizing, disputing, and sophisticating, we forget its language, as also what we ourselves really are,—we work upon words which answer to nothing real, and live in a world that is not in the least more pleasant for being purely fantastic. Youth, he might have added with his friend Sainte-Beuve, "is not hard to please in respect to ideas. It throws no great difficulties in their way; but it wants movement and generosity." As in childhood, as in youth, nothing here perhaps seems or wants to look like having come to the age of which the prophet Habakkuk says, "In medio annorum notum facies." Yet people need not feel ashamed of themselves and company on that account, since Richard of St. Victor, commenting on the passage, adds, "I nevertheless think that these are of the kingdom of heaven, and for the reason that is written elsewhere,—Imperfectum meum viderunt oculi tui, et in libro tuo omnes scribentur*."

In fine, we want for these expeditions, in order that there may be no disappointments to speak of, a little of the poetry of youth. It would be quite useless on these occasions, by way of doing the civil thing, to ask any who are void of it, like the children of Malthus, to join your party, so devoted are such men to "utility," which, as Jules Janin remarks, is their Muse and their Apollo. What have such people to admire on the Thames? They will see nothing, for instance, of the ideal in that green slope with the seat at the end, fronting the setting sun, where a person of other mould can fancy himself in Elysium, or in company that would constitute it, in a poor human way, any where. I allude to that narrow lawn girt with flowers, which you come to on the left bank, a little above Halliford. They see things with the eyes not of youth and poetry, but of what they think—knowledge, and they remind one by so doing

* Rich. S. Vict. Exposit. Cantic. Hab.

of Fontenelle's last words, "It is time for me to be going. I begin to see things as they are." We want a companion on these occasions who cannot see a solitary house in a grove without thinking of your mediæval towers, one who loves the twilight that surrounds the border-land of old romance; who has still a relish for tales about giants and islands perilous and enchanted princesses. We want him also to be, in regard to his ear at least, a child of song. Your poet, as Plato says, is a light thing, winged and sacred. Poesy, as the page says to Preciosa, in the Bohemian of Madrid, when offering her some verses, and also an écu out of his pocket, is a friend of pretty sheltered solitary scenes; brooks divert it, meadows console it, trees refresh it, flowers rejoice it. There is no poet who is not rich, since they are always content with their situation, which, as he archly adds, is a kind of philosophy for the use of but very few people. The lord page, who thus erred against his own philosophy in having a purse, was told, in reply, to be consistent by giving up his paper of verses, for which alone he was loved, and taking back and keeping for some other purpose his écu. Nobody here, at least for the time, wants the maker of costly presents; but we want the thoughts and the sympathy,—we want one who suffers his fancy sometimes to expatiate. I would not absolutely insist upon his being unable to see a window over a balcony opening on a garden, without his having secretly before him some ideal type of beauty, say a princess looking down on some Christian slave who labours in it, whom she is to deliver, of course meaning all the while himself. Though, even then, desperate as the case might be thought, St. Augustine, who exclaims "how preferable are the fables of poets to the falsehoods of philosophers! how much more useful are they, since poetry and versification are aliments of truth!" though, I say, the great doctor who says all this even then might not be over severe with us, as being too "young-eyed," since certainly in this instance we should be affirming nothing, denying nothing, and believing nothing,—still I would not exact too much. But it is not an excess to stand out for having some one who is capable in a general way of viewing every-day matters as men who are not philosophers view them; though really now-a-days that is expecting in some classes a merit which is as rare as it

is excellent. Do not all charms fly at the mere touch of cold philosophy? asks Keats, of whose subsequent lines, however, I would propose a reading of my own, in order to explain how that word should be interpreted. So, I would add,

> "Blind sophistry will clip an angel's wings,
> Conquer all mysteries by rule and line."

What will it not reduce to the condition of holding a place in "the dull catalogue of the mere surfaces that are comprised in common things?" We, on the contrary, want these surfaces of common things to be viewed in their more exact and true character, which is very often best discerned when they are seen with the eye of youth, and that is in a poetic light, in connexion with some romantic ideal, and as requiring some act of romantic, that is, begging pardon of Butler, who always uses the term as synonymous with false, of real goodness. Ah, well! of course none of us would for the world speak of matters beyond our province; but really we can't help thinking, at times, somehow as if poetry were not a purer thing than history to meddle with. Look, for instance, at the Languedoc of poor Mrs. Radcliff, with (excuse me, grave sir) its Emily's and Valencours; come, now, when you think of it seriously, is not that a better field for the mind to rest on, aye, and notwithstanding all some people's frowns, more redolent of Catholicity, in the strictest sense of the term, than the Languedoc of Simon de Montfort, and the Inquisition with the poor preaching friars even imploring to be released from its odious obligations, and with all, perhaps, the greater horrors, which it was called upon to remedy—scenes strictly historical, grave enough, in all conscience, but not the less sickening and execrable as explored by the indignant though restrained, and perhaps slily malicious, pen of Dom Vaissette, the Benedictine of St. Maur? And, besides, even supposing that such wretched things were not unfolded by the past, is not the fresh poetry of youth a nobler companion than the exact concocted knowledge which people of middle age are always in such a hurry to substitute for it? Good heavens! "what a rage for being true!" exclaims a graceful author in exposing the literary poverty of his times. To what lengths will it not lead us! In my opinion we ought to

have permission to be less cruelly exact, not to be obliged every moment to say, "this is red or that is white, or even to decompose the colour in order to say this is violet." The chiefs of this school ought not to require us, when amidst such scenes as we are passing through on the sweet river, to render a precise account of every thing; such as, for example, the number of doors and windows in the house as exactly as if we were the tax-collector. We want more fancy than all this supposes, for we want some one ready to regard and practise virtue in the spirit of romance, to whisper in our ear some suggestion resembling thoughts of yours, O children! Alas! without even yourselves being present there are who cannot be contented.

"For what are all our contrivings,
And the wisdom of our books,
When compared with your caresses,
And the gladness of your looks?
Ye are better than all the ballads
That ever were sung or said,
For ye are living poems,
And all the rest are dead *."

We want, to say the whole truth, the romantic feeling, that which St. Augustine did not refer to when he condemned himself for weeping for Dido, though it may be that which, as Mr. Ruskin says, "you in the nineteenth century are accustomed to despise, that secret and poetical enthusiasm, which, as practical men, and not in the least like St. Augustine, you try to restrain, though it is indeed one of the holiest parts of your being,—so far from being a dangerous guide that it is the truest part of your being, truer even than your conscience; for a man's conscience may be utterly perverted and led astray, as all history can attest; but so long as the feelings of romance endure within us,—so long as you dare not do any thing that the girl or the boy would call base,—so long as you dare not outrage that poor Love which under so many forms, human and divine, might be a guide to heaven,—as far as their limits extend they are unerring, they are as true to what is right and lovely as the needle

* Longfellow.

to the north; and this explains the maxim of Vauvenargues that reason deceives oftener than nature. True friendship is romantic,—true religion is romantic*." "The romantic disposition," as a celebrated Frenchwoman remarks, "is a yearning for the ideal in all that is fair; and it argues a logical turn also, since all that in vulgar reality confines this aspiration is put aside by it, and counted for nothing. Fervent Christians are romantic in this respect, this logic being rigorous and absolute." It might be added, on the whole, that all true goodness in all relations is romantic; and few can be wholly insensible to this spirit's charm. Even the aged and the stern sometimes surrender to it. "Lionel Haughton," said Guy Darrel, when the former had finished his narrative about the girl and his entreaties on her behalf, and every reader expects to hear a cold and merciless reply, "I have to thank you for one very happy minute; the sight of a heart so fresh in the limpid purity of goodness is a luxury you cannot comprehend till you have come to my age." How freely and deliciously one breathes after hearing that reply! And yet your grave critic who stays at home is disposed to question or deny all this, and to talk of the wisdom of those who bid adieu to imagination and to the Muses, and promise to devote themselves to what is solid and positive and "true," as if the illusions of maturer life, for being subversive of all that is poetical and gracious, were always on that account more elevated and more serious than those of the young and of men courting serene hours. "Of course," as replied an ancient orator cited by Sainte-Beuve, "this poesy of youth leads neither to honours nor to consulships; but is it for that reason more vain?" Ah! far from fearing the woods and gardens, or, as we should add, the river, I consider as infinitely inferior to what they yield all this noisy, vulgar, demoralizing routine that constitutes the prose of an ambitious life in the hurry and collisions of the world. "Nemora vero, et luci et secretum ipsum quod Aper increpabat," I would say with the ancient sage, "tantam mihi afferunt voluptatem ut inter præcipuos carminum fructus numerem, quod nec in strepitu, nec sedente ante ostium litigatore, nec inter sordes ac lacrymas

* Lectures, &c.

reorum componuntur, sed secedit animus in loca pura atque innocentia, fruiturque sedibus sacris . . . . Ac ne fortunam quidem vatum, et illud felix contubernium, comparare timuerim cum inquieta et anxia oratorum vita; licet illos certamina et pericula sua ad consulatus evexerint: malo securum et secretum Virgilii secessum, in quo tamen neque apud divum Augustum gratia caruit neque apud populum Romanum notitia."

Possibly, however, we may say in a fit of despondency when coming near the end of this day's ramble, it is only the very young who can perfectly enjoy what we are attempting to analyze, since, let others continue to be what they may, circumstances will often prove too strong for them. When you are named the man or the gentleman without the 'young' being added, as old Fitzdottrel was shrewd enough to foresee, there may be not very much for you to expect in this way that we are concerned with. Possibly, indeed, this serene hour, too, in some of its prerogatives, is but a violet in the youth of primy nature—

> "Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
> The perfume and suppliance of a minute.
> No more———"

The child, the boy, and little girl! Ah, yes! they assuredly, at all events, have their serene hours. See with what eyes they walk and run about the garden. Common juveniles, too, seem to carry these hours with them every where, with their baskets, and at all times. Only just look in their countenances, whether they run in the street, or swim in the river, or sit in the school, or converse in the workshop; it is always a smiling mouth, an arch, pleasant eye, a good-natured hand stretched out; you have before you serenity embodied, though it be witnessed in some mere Jack-a-Lent in shreds, whose thin sides are said to need a switch.

Nevertheless, it is still true that some of those solid ones from whose company we turned away on setting out this morning, get cured of their unfavourable dispositions by witnessing and studying the young. As Green says,—

> "Preferring sense from chin that's bare,
> To nonsense throned in whisker'd air,"

they come almost to verify in themselves the remark of Goethe, that a man is always of the time of life that he wishes himself to be; and, accordingly, some one in an old play exclaims, "I'm turn'd boy again! a very stripling." Even without having followed the golden maxim to live in general when old with persons younger than themselves, by seeking to become young only for a few hours, a holiday may have restored them to a wholesome mind, as a holiday restores the wearied artisan; and this is better even than what the Cardinal d'Estrées talked of when he said, "Et me semble que je mets un fard innocent sur les rides de ma vieillesse;" for it is an advantage which the Church on Holy Saturday seems to wish for the whole world, not for a short interval, but for ever, praying, "ut omnis homo in veræ innocentiæ novam infantiam renascatur, et quos aut sexus in corpore aut ætas discernit in tempore, omnes in unam pariat gratia mater infantiam."

> "Life is but thought; so think I will
> That youth and I are house-mates still."

As Jules Janin says, alluding to the youthful spirit, "We can make a sign to the silly one as to a stray dove, and it will return to perch on our heads and protect us with its wing, provided only that it may fly away again the instant after."

The ancients, when sporting on a fine day, used to entertain themselves with riddles. Thus they said of thistledown:—

> "I know a thing, which, while its young, is heavy,
> But when its old, though void of wings, can fly
> With lightest motion out of sight o' the earth."

This might be an image, too, of such age restored and reanimated, and again winged to soar through the serene air. Then might follow songs like the duet between Sir Solitary and Lady Plot, when the former is disabused.

> "Welcome, welcome again to thy wits,
> This is a holyday;
> I'll have no plots nor melancholy fits,
> But merrily pass the time away.
> They are mad that are sad;
> Be ruled by me,
> And none shall be so merry as we."

When breaking off, he exclaims:—

> "No more, lest with the joy I run into
> A madness worse than melancholy. You tell
> Me wonders. Bless my senses!—and shall we dance?
> I am for any mirth; the day requires it,
> In which love, too long blind, hath found his eyes,
> And leads the way to his own paradise."

"I get on pretty well," says one of an unknown author's men of middle age, speaking of two other elderly gentlemen who had gone without him from Smallport to Dunkerque, "yes, pretty well, though now and then I miss my playfellows sadly." To such persons, stalwart and unbowed, with young blood still in their veins, may be applicable the lines of Cowley:—

> "Nor can the snow, which now cold Age does shed
> Upon thy rev'rend head,
> Quench or allay the noble fires within.
> But all which thou hast been,
> And all that youth can be, thou art yet;
> So fully still dost thou
> Enjoy the manhood and the bloom of wit.
>
> To things immortal Time can do no wrong,
> And that which never is to die, for ever must be young."

Yes, as some one says in allusion to such renovations, it may sometimes happen that the evening hours of such a life "may be the most beautiful," as the fairest leaves in the flower are the last that the bud will disclose.

These are happy results, but they must not always be expected. From others meanwhile, alas! the models, at least as standing in their own domestic studio, are taken away, and with them, when hindered from frequenting public haunts where they are always found, the thoughts themselves perish.

> "Ut vigeant sensus animi, discenda tamen sunt
> Funera natorum———
> Hæc data pœna diu viventibus, ut, renovata
> Semper clade domus, multis in luctibus, inque
> Perpetuo mœrore, et nigra veste senescant *."

* Juv. x.

The pull back to-day, after paying thus "the meed of some melodious tear," if not sad, is pensive. Youth is thoughtful. I think we must have caught the infection. Still, they were somewhat pleasant hours we spent together, were they not? This silent returning home, too, is agreeable. To think is good, even when we say nothing.

CHAPTER V.

ONE must have started early from London, though taking to the river only from Richmond, to be landing at the Sun Gardens at Kingston about the aurora in the month of July. The thing can be done, however, as will be testified by many a bright summer's morning after hearing words, though from no fairy, like those of Oberon,—

> "Trip away,
> Make no stay;
> Meet me all by break of day."

To be sure there are difficulties enough, natural and artificial, in getting a crew together out of their beds in time from different parts of London. They remind one of the complaint of our old poet, who says somewhere or other,

> "Birds go to bed in rest, and are not troubled
> With putting on their hose and shoes i' th' morning,
> With gartering, girdling, pinning, buttoning,
> And a thousand torments that afflict humanity.
> ——— Blessed birds!
> They, fortunate creatures! sleep in their own clothes,
> And rise with all their feather-beds about them."

However, let me tell you, that this landing here for breakfast is a pleasant thing, when already the brilliant light of the sun

makes clear the morning carols of the birds, and the dark night has gone from heaven.

> "Day had awakened all things that be,
> The lark and the thrush and the swallow free,
> And the milkmaid's song and the mower's scythe,
> And the matin-bell and the meadow-bee;
> Fireflies were quenched on the dewy corn,
> Glowworms went out on the river's brim,
> Like lamps which a student forgets to trim."

On mounting the stairs, you find yourself on a terrace overlooking the river and sloping back into a garden, which is tastefully laid out, I pronounce, though some may dislike what they call cockney style, with no end of flowers, opening their bosoms at this moment to the ascending sun, and intermixed every where with trellised arbours, and statues and rock-work. In the middle of this garden is a plot of ground like a meadow; the grass spangled with daisies, and all round it are walks lined with roses and a variety of shrubs of which the blossoms diffuse a delicious odour. But not to speak of what lies farther on towards the street, where I must own there is nothing to put you in mind of the exemptions in the Arabian Nights in which there is no mention of tobacco, you can enjoy yourself to your heart's content. Looking from the terrace, if you turn your eyes down the river, there is the bridge and wooded islands beyond it. Facing you are the solemn groves of Bushy Park, which towards evening must form a delicious landscape; and if you look up the stream, you can discern, glittering in the sun, the Italian campanile of the beautiful church, which raises up associations of more interest, as we shall find before the end of the season, than the loveliness of wood, and water, and air, by itself can ever yield.

We were pensive at parting, dear comrades, when we had our last ramble,—pensive to such a degree that we never thought even of mentioning how or when we got home, though in our bountifulness we promised always to give you such information. However, all is fresh and reviving now that we go forth again into the summer air. As the Host in the Two Gentlemen of Verona says to his young guest—

"Come, we'll have you merry. I'll bring
You where you shall hear music."

These first excursions have directly suggested only thoughts of a very light nature: and to-day we shall not aspire to grasp more solid things. If the reader should not apprehend the scope of what is presented on our first voyages, later expeditions will perhaps furnish occasion to discover it. As Bassanio says to Antonio—

"I owe you much; and like a wilful youth,
That which I owe is lost; but if you please
I'll shoot another arrow that self way
Which I did shoot the first. I do not doubt,
As you will watch the aim, you will find both,
And bring my latter hazard back again,
And own that you rest debtor for the first."

To shoot an arrow then already that you will not find, perhaps, till later, let me suggest that for rambles in any direction, or parties on the river, whether large or only of the dual number, we need persons who, be their condition what it may, are of a natural character, who are, moreover, somewhat given at times to watch nature, and who always love it; who are willing themselves, where no obstacle is presented, to acquiesce in the natural order; who even feel a pleasure in seeing it under the same circumstances fulfilled by others, and a very ambiguous satisfaction when hearing, whatever be the reason suggested, of its unnecessary violation, believing as they do with St. Augustine that "there is no health or soundness in the mind of him who is displeased with any thing of God's creation*." At present, however, we shall only glance at the lightest and most superficial traits of this character, which consists in being natural, and in liking what in a good sense is natural.

It is chiefly, indeed, during serene hours, and on occasions of the kind we are describing, that such qualities are appreciated or called forth. Yesterday, on the river or in the garden, for what a little matter were you a handsome fellow, a fine fellow, a good fellow, and a useful fellow! But to-day, got back among

* Confess. vii.

the equipages, or among the loungers, or among the briefs, or among the orators, the case is altered; your nature is changed, you are too common-like or little known to be handsome, too simple to be clever, too natural to suit. To-day you want what a French author says constitutes in town the greatest part of man. Neither with your wit nor your countenance, neither with your thoughts nor your manners, can you be qualified for any post in the great world of ambition or affairs. It's very unfortunate, but we can't change things at our pleasure.

However, to return to the matter in hand, as the phrase is, though at present you might think it's only an oar we have in it. Our companions then, it is needless to say, must be good fellows, as your old theologians say, "of good natural disposition*;" and that supposes each of them in purity of manhood, standing upright, and speaking his mind freely, prepared to play out the whole of a man's part down to taking recreation like the most unpretending of the vulgar. Some of the company at Aristo's house having censured Pliny for certain verses of his, saying that he let down his dignity when he so amused himself, he replied to them through his friend Aristo, assuring him that he pleaded guilty to the charge. "I confess," he says to him,—and I hope no one will associate such a mode of defence with the paganism of the speaker.—"I confess that I do amuse myself in the merriest way. In short, I am nothing averse from pleasantry, mirth, and gaiety, or, to sum up, every kind of innocent relaxation. In one word, I am a man: I am not at all displeased if those who are ignorant that the most learned, the wisest, and the best of men have amused themselves in the same way, should be surprised at me; but those who know what noble examples I follow, will allow me, I trust, thus to err with those whom it is an honour to imitate, not only in their most serious occupations, but lightest amusements."

"Of lawless folly misery is the end, but the life of quiet and wisdom remains unshaken, and supports a house." London, too, should with one voice join so far with this Greek chorus. Yes, truly! "For it is well," as a great commentator on the

* Boutauld, Conseils de la Sagesse, 91.

Allegro and Penseroso of Milton says, "to be in good spirits with all about one; to love nature, not for the power we can get out of it, as if we wanted to figure in the annals of science; but for the pleasure it affords us, as only so many units in the population; it is well to be at peace with town as well as country; to go to the play innocently, and laugh; to the village green, and dance; to be able to add a variation to the general stock of comfort, and not of sullenness *." This is no lawless folly, but it is the life which supports not a house only, as the poet says, but states and empires. "Happy those," exclaims Fenelon, "who have no taste for out of the way, artificial, violent, expensive pleasures, and who can be contented with the natural sweets of an innocent life! Happy those who can be amused with what instructs them! Ennui, which in the midst of delights devours others, never comes near them." The saintly archbishop then speaks in a very unphilosophic way of hearing the songs of the birds, and the sweet breath of zephyrs playing amidst the branches, and the murmurs of the clear brook falling from the rock, and the songs which the Muses inspire in the shepherds of Apollo. These last, to be sure, we cannot expect to hear in our suburban localities; but, let me tell you, a certain naturalness of taste may be developed very effectually on our Thames, especially if one pushes one's navigation as far up the river as Runnymead. What do you think, for instance, of a header at sunset from a meadow below Shepperton Lock, where the eddying water of the river lies in the deep troughs under the willows bending over them, or a swim at noon between that halting-place and Penton Hook, where even the solitude under such brightness is cheerful? What think you of the moment, when from the former field you see the dark blue horizon beneath the golden lines of clouds through which the sun is sinking, caught at intervals between the groves, and feel the fresh breeze springing up from the wild sky, and observe rather timidly certain forerunners of the darkness coming on, and are conscious that the noisy swimmers are the only persons near, as if belonging to a passing invasion of nude savages just landed on the grassy herbage, who have their canoe as it were

* Leigh Hunt, Imag. and Fancy.

ready alongside it, into which they soon all are to jump, to hurry down the stream never to be seen in that quiet neighbourhood again, or at least not for a twelvemonth? Or what think you of watching the herds and flocks upon the shore, the troops of horses perhaps grazing or cantering on the green plain, as if they had been offerings to the river, after the old fashion practised by the Trojans in regard to the Scamander, and by Julius Cæsar himself before passing the Rubicon*? Or, again, to require a less elevated flight of fancy, what think you of weary rowers by night, watching to catch the first echoes of the falling waters of the wear, which will announce the approach to a lock, that always affords five minutes' rest to them much wanting it?

The grave reader who has probably never in his life heard of Penton Hook, and who never wants rest, and who already despairs of finding this arrow that I am shooting off, is clearly made all this while restless and uncomfortable by hinting at an intention to extol natural tastes and characters. He does not like the word nature or natural; if of a dogmatical turn, he thinks our aim decidedly pernicious, and that's the long and short of it. But without waiting to hear his objections, which now-a-days can easily be foreseen, since we have men even inventing new terms unknown to the ancient theology, whether of the east or west, in order to widen breaches and to contradict in a more direct and formal way the ordinary language and sentiments of mankind, let us proceed, as some would say in homely phrase, to shut him up by means of a few passages from an author whom he is bound, I suppose, to respect somewhat, and who can be the more appropriately chosen for our advocate in this emergency, as having actually been qualified by Dante as altogether above nature—"more than man." Let us hear, then, what says Richard of St. Victor about men and things in regard to this distinction; and independent of what people owe to themselves, they should attend to the passage with more alacrity, as being calculated to dissipate the scruples of others who are engaged in the gravest pursuits of mind, who may be sometimes their companions on these occasions, and whom, whether present or absent, they are bound not to offend by the least suggestion

* Sur le Culte des Divin. des Eaux. Hist. de l'Acad. des Inscript. vi.

that could be interpreted in a sense to cause them displeasure. "It may be well then," writes this great guide, "to be moved to good merely by the human disposition and delight, for such impulses of humanity can be used with advantage, since from them we can derive greater alacrity to do what we have to do. For where natural things co-operate our spirit is more prompt, and it acts with greater energy, and as the prophet intimates, saying, 'cor meum, et caro mea exsultaverunt in Deum vivum*.'" Again and elsewhere he writes as follows: "'In funiculis Adam traham eos, in vinculis charitatis†.' What are these cords of Adam, our first parent, but the gifts of God? What are these bonds of charity but the benefits of God, the goods of nature, of grace, and of glory? He founded nature, He conferred grace, He promised glory! Behold the triple cord—the gifts of condition, the goods of justification, the rewards of glorification‡." That natural gifts are to be despised and suspected, as our Catos would have us imagine, is a lesson you perceive that the holy canon of St. Victor in the "dark ages" is far from teaching. But let us hear him again, all mystical as he is, and we shall feel pretty tranquil as to modern objectors,—"'Adversus Dominum et adversus Christum ejus.' There are in us gifts of nature and gifts of grace; as we distinguish between the Lord and his Christ, understanding by the first our Creator, by the latter our Saviour: the gifts of nature pertain to the Creator, but the gifts of grace to the Saviour. I call gifts of nature, when in consequence of natural disposition we see some more prone to mercy, others more severe; some more prudent, others more simple, and so on through similar virtues which a man may have naturally; but the gifts of grace are those which he cannot have by nature;—the former we receive from the Creator, the latter from the Saviour. When, therefore, we abuse the gifts of nature, we sin against the Creator, not fearing to destroy his work. When we corrupt the gifts of grace, we act more directly against the Saviour who died for our restoration. As then vicious manners and demons, instigators of vices, endeavour to subvert in us both the gifts of nature and those of grace, they are represented as

* In Cant. Cantic. † Osée i.

‡ De quatuor gradibus, &c.

raging not alone against the Lord, but also against his Christ*." In fine, he goes so far as to proclaim that our taste for natural characters, in a general way, and supposing them subject to the Divine order, may rest on a very solid foundation, as you will perceive after hearing him speak as follows: "Some things are left without the ark, exposed to destruction, others within it reserved for life; and among the reserved are not alone rational but also irrational things, clean and unclean, as there are men just and unjust. For example, some one passing sees another afflicted with hunger and cold, and immediately, without any deliberation, he is moved with pity; his thought calls on him to supply his wants, but perchance he hardens his ears through avarice, and resolves to give nothing. Behold there an animal clean and a man unjust; the clean animal suggests assistance and moves to compassion, but the man unjust deliberates and refuses. On the other hand, for the sake of humility, there are reserved unclean animals, while the just man deliberates and refuses to follow them. But what is very remarkable is the fact that often clean animals hinder from good, and impel to evil, while, on the other hand, the unclean assist good, and strengthen against evil. Who does not acknowledge that natural affections are sometimes indulged in to excess, so as to militate against the love of God; and, on the other hand, who does not blush at the thorn in the flesh, while it nevertheless assists many to preserve them from pride and to keep them humble? And that is why innumerable clean animals were left to perish in the flood, while not a few unclean were reserved after the deluge. For whatever opposes perfection, whether shameful or honourable, is left to perish, and whatever conduces to it, whether it be clean or unclean, is reserved for the purposes of good. It is therefore useless and impossible to expose to death all unclean animals. It is sufficient not to receive into the ark of our conscience any perverse men; for it is one thing not to be able wholly to mortify all fleshly appetites, and it is another to admit what is base with deliberation and consent†." Upon the whole he seems to recommend great moderation in regard to opinions on this subject. If any one had said to him, "But

* Id. Adnot. in Ps. ii.

† Id. in Ps. xxviii.

these sentiments are of the creature," he would probably have replied with St. Francis de Sales, "Well, be it so. They are not, however, to be rejected on that account, since they lead to God*." "Ne faites guère de réflexions sur ce que votre nature mêlera avec vos actions: ces saillies doivent être négligées†." He clearly would agree with the elder Balzac in maintaining that religion and reason do not destroy humanity, that they are not opposed to natural affections, that they do not condemn friendships and hours made serene by them, and that philosophy and Christianity are in accordance, in that respect, with nature. These are important principles; for why put us out of conceit with things allowable and necessary and inevitable, by seeking to associate them with images from which nature recoils? One would think that in a solitary instance our English language was in league with such philosophers, seeming as if it wished to disgust us with our wives' relations, by not letting us pronounce their names without our having the terrors of the law brought before our eyes; whereas the French tongue only reminds us on such occasions in a most charming way of what we have set our hearts on, and takes for granted that it imparts beauty and handsomeness to what we love even without their possessing such attractions, bidding us say, "beau frère et belle sœur." This may be fanciful, but the principles we speak of involve consequences more serious. Let any one read the three sermons of Butler upon human nature, and he will see reason to dread the opposite mistakes of many in our age; for with regard to one class he will find proof there that "language itself should teach people another sense to the words *following nature* than barely acting as we please;" and in respect to the other he will be convinced that we ought to be influenced by our real nature, which involves the due subordination of all our passions and inclinations to that conscience which constituted a law for the Gentiles, and which no one can disregard under any pretence while acting agreeably to the constitution of our nature, which we were intended by our Maker to fall in with. After all, it strikes one that the gravest men should ponder, and that too through a religious motive, though it is we who say it, before

* Lett. 45. † Ibid. 499.

qualifying in our hearing, as base and vile, any thing that is divinely ordained, however little they may individually like it. It is true we cannot wonder at misconceptions in regard to the whole subject, since in the same books that contain them we find these rhetoricians talking of "la lumière sombre qui éclaire les yeux des misérables mortels, et qui n'est que ténèbres."

Society is said to retain traces of an influence that is not of very ancient date, which has to a degree, unrequired by any true principle, unnaturalized manners more or less throughout Europe. It is the remark of a great French author that Louis XIV. substituted in all things 'simplicité' for 'naïveté;' in other words, studied for natural simplicity, the result of design for a free acceptance of the gift of nature; that he substituted nobility for grandeur, dignity for force, elegance for grace; that he effaced characters, and polished in a certain way the surface of souls, that he took away great vices and also great virtues, and that he substituted the purely literary school for that great school of heroic goodness, of which the masters were Corneille and Bossuet. Now, for the happy intervals that we have in view, it will be necessary to escape from this influence, and return to the old benches that favour more what is natural, generating unaffected simplicity, manliness, goodness, and genius. "Let us even avoid," Madame Swetchine used to say, "whatever can efface the primitive lineaments of our individuality. Let us consider that in a certain sense each of us is a thought of God*."

So much, then, for what is required in this respect as regards persons being of a natural character, with whom every thing, in one sense or other, prospers; "whereas," as Neoptolemus replies, "every thing is inconvenient when one, having abandoned his own nature, does what befits him not."

Let us proceed to remark, that those who are eligible for accompanying expeditions of this kind should be accustomed, in a quiet and unostentatious way, to watch and to love nature.

What is naturally beautiful, said the Greek poet, is pleasant, —the earth, and the waters, and the sky, and the creatures,— but all the rest is fear, and grief, and the waiting for a retri-

* Pensées de Mme. Swet.

butive Nemesis. Does it not strike you that these are very remarkable words, and capable of a very wide, and practicable, and Christian application? But this is not the place for dwelling on what is most important in relation to them; we are only concerned here with a question of taste. We do not, then, require our companions, during the intervals we treat of, to be artists or naturalists professed; that would be quite beside the mark, and likely to subject them in the latter instance to the fate so humorously described by Sydney Smith when he speaks of Dr. Shaw being "puzzled, and having the latter half of his life made miserable, from his utter inability to determine whether some strange animal he saw was a bird or a beast," and of some other natural production "agitating" Sir Joseph Banks, and "filling him with emotions of distress and delight," results far from conducive to serenity, as any one can perceive without being cautioned; but to maintain that they should be inclined to take notice with pleasure of things of the natural order around them, we must be permitted to consider only very reasonable: and, indeed, already we may begin to perceive how such hours conduce to ends of sufficient magnitude to render a wish to enjoy them not only allowable, but in the highest sense laudable. Richard of St. Victor says even of the angels, that their joy consists not alone in contemplating the Creator, but also, what many men seem to disdain, in contemplating his creatures; "so that," he adds, "you perceive how spiritual pastures are found not only in interior things, but also in exterior things, in bodily things*." Then elsewhere he says, "We deny not that some things of the future life, yea, many and great, may be sought and found by investigation and reason. For the invisible things of God may be seen and understood by the creatures of the w rld which have been made, and which therefore furnish a study that is not to be neglected. Behold the earth which God has made, and the city which human art has instituted, 'considerate terram et urbem†!'" "Observe the good which God created for our good, and that, too, whatever it be, which man has invented. Consider nature and custom, the good of creation

* Benjamin Major, lib. ii. c. 16.

† Josue ii.

and the evil of corruption; you will then know what to cultivate and what to multiply *."

But you will ask, perhaps, what in this order of things have we to watch on the river or in such gardens or walks as parties of pleasure repair to? Well, here you are, sir, as the boys say when ready to supply all your wants. In truth you would not ask such a foolish question if you were in the mood ascribed to himself by the joyous author who describes his visit to the Hostel of the Bon Lapin. "For that day," saith he, "I was wholly given up to the happiness of existing, of breathing, of being young, of feeling a pure and warm air circulating round me, admiring, like a child, the smallest flowers, remaining for whole quarters of hours together, with a magisterial gravity, merely to see the sails of a windmill turn round." What have you to watch? Why the first object that presents itself, though it were merely the coming to shore of a wherry, as Madame de Montpensier in her Mémoires describes herself watching the arrival of boats from her window over the Dordogne at Bourg, or when you are floating among the rushes though it were only "quelqu'un du peuple croassant" that has jumped into your skiff from a creek

> "Where winds with reeds and osiers whispering play;"

where its pool seems to lie half asleep in grass and rushes, on which

> "Quick waterflies and gnats are sporting still
> And fish are dimpling,"

where

> "——————— a whispering blade
> Of grass, a wailful fly, a bee bustling
> Down in the blue-bells, or a wren light rustling
> Among sere leaves and twigs, may all be heard;"

or, for at Midsummer we leave our suburban haunts, lower down the river, some bank where you may practise your chorus to Neptune and to the green hairs of the Nereids. Even there, below bridges, and supposing that you were to reach the sea itself, you would find nature, by means of colouring at least,

* De Exterminatione Mali, lib. ii. c. 11.

supplying you now and then with glimpses of fairy-land. Do you hear, for instance, that boy and girl, when they first awaken of a morning, crying out from their window at sunrise, "Oh, see the golden ship!" Look at it yourself. There it is, sure enough, for all the world as if made of gold. And then in the evening that roseate sky nearly opposite to the sun that contrasts so harmoniously with the pale green water, meeting it at the horizon, and blending into deep dark green beneath your feet, with all its vessels black under the shade of the cliff on which you stand, or, in the happier sites inland when we return to them, that golden firmament at sunset, or later that green light lingering in the west, broken so artistically in the garden by the umbrageous canopy of trees over which rise at intervals the cypress spires and the graceful foliage of the acacia; and then the groups of unselfish people enjoying themselves as can only the affectionate, the beautiful countenances, and the harmonious colours of their costume. Are these things not worthy of being watched, without any view to a scientific analysis of what constitutes them, or to an odious curiosity about their condition in relation to the invisible? Cowley thinks that Vandyke in heaven will at least remember his having copied them:—

> "Where he beholds new sights, divinely fair,
> And could almost wish for his pencil there;
> Did he not gladly see how all things shine,
> Wondrously painted in the mind divine;
> Whilst he, for ever ravish'd with the show,
> Scorns his own art, which we admire below."

Nor is it pleasure alone that such observers gain; they are better informed in consequence, to be which of course is the grand thing now. A three days' expedition on the Thames as far as Windsor and back will almost of necessity be attended with results similar to those of having assisted, with more or less attention, at a course of lectures on botany, and ornithology, and hydrostatics, and perhaps some other sciences, if one could only think of their names. What a study is there of water-lilies, white and golden, and of charming flowers of every hue, and broad amphibious weeds falling into such graceful shapes,

and bulrushes bending and curling so constantly at your elbow, that for some days after you cannot see the shadows of youthful locks falling upon a white collar, forming similar caves and cavities, without thinking of them! Again, recurring to our swans. What a "serening" thing it is to watch them on the Thames, a river which seems to be as dear to them now as ever were the Meander, the Mincio, the Strymon, and the Caystra, that were all once so celebrated for the multitude of these birds. In the middle ages they were in full possession of most of our rivers, the Seine not excepted even to the walls of the capital, as the very name still surviving of the Isle aux Cygnes can bear witness. According to Volaterra there were no fewer than four thousand on the Thames, and Bewick says, "so well are they protected that it continues at this day to be accounted felony (I beg pardon for introducing the word) to steal their eggs." Poets of old used to be called swans. Each was distinguished as the swan of such and such a town, just as nobles used to be called after their parish *. You see how they were honoured. Then what dear little birds, such as you never saw before, hop about, and flit through the osiers and rushes, as you swim by, reminding you, perhaps, of these lines of Burns—

> "I'm truly sorry man's dominion
> Has broken nature's social union,
> And justifies that ill opinion
> Which makes thee startle
> At me, thy poor earth-born companion
> And fellow-mortal!"

"Let no one speak lightly of birds," says a celebrated Frenchwoman; "in many respects they might be our models." Some one found Rousseau occupied in feeding sparrows with crumbs. "Well, they have had their breakfast," he said; "but shall I tell you what they are about to do? They are going to the house-top to say that I am an old fool, and that my bread is good for nothing." It was not enough for him, you see, to despise men; he must calumniate the birds. That is not what

* Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscr. vii.

we are recommending. Rather would I scatter every where the poet's lines—

> "Do you ne'er think what wondrous beings these?
> Do you ne'er think who made them, and who taught
> The dialect they speak, where melodies
> Alone are the interpreters of thought?
> Whose household words are songs in many keys,
> Sweeter than instrument of man e'er caught;
> Whose habitations in the tree-tops even
> Are half-way houses on the road to heaven."

Of course, we cannot expect on the Thames to be presented with any such ornithological facts as Theodulfe, bishop of Orleans, on an excursion, made by order of Charlemagne in the eighth century, witnessed on the frontiers of the country of Toulouse and Querci, where two troops of birds, one from the south and the other from the north, met together, ranged themselves in battle round a field surrounded with trees, on which they perched, sent messages between each host, as if they wished to try negotiation first and avoid fighting, and, in fine, after many despatches from each side alternately, came to action, and attacked each other with incredible fury, the combat lasting six days, and only ceasing for want of combatants. A few of those birds who had come from the north saved themselves by flight back again, but the vast majority of both sides perished on the field. Crowds of people came from all sides to witness this engagement, and amongst them Maricion, bishop of Toulouse. Whole chariots went away loaded with their bodies: all which details, given in the account of his journey by the good bishop, were thought by Dom Vaissette, the most unimaginative and matter-of-fact of all men, worthy of being inserted even in the abridgment of his great history of Languedoc*. But though in these peaceful times, when order reigns among the birds, such sights are not reserved for our eyes, there are many individuals of the winged tribes which, while engaged in their usual cares, can be watched with infinite delight, though we may not have amongst us another Audubon, who, when he visited Cam-

* Abrégé de l'Hist. de Languedoc, tom. ii. 16.

bridge, was able in a half-hour's stroll behind the colleges to discover how many species were denizens of those groves:—

> "Sometimes goldfinches one by one will drop
> From low-hung branches: little space they stop;
> But sip and twitter, and their feathers sleek;
> Then off at once, as in a wanton freak."

Honest robin, "that loves mankind both alive and dead," is of course an old acquaintance; but where else excepting on the river do you meet the reed fauvette, those country cousins of our town friends the sparrows, or the titlark shooting its rapid flight at the least noise, or the wagtails loving the shallow margins of the stream, or the willow wren, or the titmice with their delicate nests at the end of branches projecting over the water, or the moor-hen with her hairy progeny, or the kingfisher, too, flitting where the stream is most rapid, or exposing its bright colours to the sun to attract the fish over which it flutters with expanded wings? Its nest, if you are fortunate enough to find it, is to be wondered at, being made of little fishes' bones, with such a geometrical interweaving and connexion as the like is not to be done by the art of man. In short, swimmers, divers, all can be studied as we glide along, marking their language, as it were, and their different ways of flying, and their habits and seasons of migration, being, in fact, like ourselves in that respect, excursionists; for what are we, too, but birds of passage? Perhaps, however, above all, the swallows ought to be carefully watched. Mr. White says that as the summer declines their congregating flocks increase in number daily, till at last they swarm in myriads round the villages on the Thames, in the aits or islets of which they roost. In almost all known countries they are regarded as the friends of man; and justly so, adds Buffon, considering their services. The chimney swallow is domestic by instinct; it seeks in preference the human society, and prefers it to all others; but it likes houses somewhat retired, in which there is not too much movement and noise, "la foule n'est point la société." Cardan, in the amusing account of his own family, tells us that he bore for arms a swallow as singularly appropriate to his habits, "being harmless, not disdainful of the society of the poor, and loving to be always with those of

human kind*." Naturalists assure us that the same birds return every year to the same places. They leave them with regret when obliged by famine, and return as soon as ever they can find subsistence in their native place. During their absence they repair to Egypt and to the African coast. Surely such details acquire a peculiar interest on the Thames as these winged excursionists dash by you with their return-tickets. Moreover, even without having an angler's eye, the deep pools and the wears present a kind of study as you watch the lonely melancholy pike, or where you are told at least how the trout at certain seasons get almost miraculously through them, even through such high and swift places, with the stream against them, as is nearly incredible. Nor are we to overlook the shallows

> "Where swarms of minnows show their little heads,
> Staying their wavy bodies 'gainst the streams,
> To taste the luxury of sunny beams
> Temper'd with coolness. How they ever wrestle
> With their own sweet delight, and ever nestle
> Their silver bellies on the pebbly sand!
> If you but scantily hold out the hand,
> That very instant not one will remain;
> But turn your eye, and they are there again."

Then, too, you may guess what an exercise it would be to examine those very many flies, worms, and little living creatures with which the sun and summer beautify the river banks and meadows, pleasures which may be enjoyed without our being professional and scientific students of nature. "The other day," says Malebranche, "that I was lying down in the shade I remarked the variety of herbs and small animals that were under my eye. I counted, without changing my place, more than twenty different kinds of insects of which I did not know the name, if they have even one, which is doubtful. Well, I took one of these insects and examined it, and I do not hesitate to say of it what Christ affirmed of the lily of the field, that Solomon in all his glory was not so magnificently arrayed; and then I began to think how there is an infinite number of these

* De Vita Propria, cap. 33.

tiny creatures, at least a million of times smaller than any I saw, —fifty thousand times smaller than a grain of sand *." In fine, the water itself, the eldest daughter of the creation, the element upon which the Spirit of God did first move, and that which philosophers make to comprehend all the other elements, presents an interesting study. Walton cites an ingenious Spaniard saying, that "rivers and its inhabitants were made for wise men to contemplate, and fools to pass by without consideration." Although you may not count yourself in the number of the wise, you can easily relish some of the good fisherman's delights when he describes his "sitting to watch the silver streams glide silently towards their centre, the tempestuous sea, yet sometimes opposed by rugged roots, and fallen trunks, and pebble stones which turn them into foam." There, too, like a disciple of the Abbé Paravel, you can be reflecting on the somewhat mysterious source of rivers, never spent after thousands of years; you can be studying the force of water all the while, and the laws of eddies and currents, and can be learning to know on which side the stream will be most rapid; and then, perhaps, by way of compliment for it all, you may get a slap on the back from a tall bulrush as the boat cuts by it. But mark little things of a different order. St. Augustine says that a lizard on the wall, or a spider, is enough to captivate his eyes. He seems to blame himself indeed for the curiosity which was the first cause of his watching them; but he acknowledges also that he passes from observing such little objects to praise the admirable ordainer of all things; and therefore I should think that people disposed this way need not be afraid of incurring even his censure. Watch, then, that boy in the park, for instance, playing with his dog. Was ever company better suited to each other? the one is the shadow of the other; it bounds, it laughs, it frolics with and like the other. Both are merry, little ambitious, mad after taking walks, and going out for the day, and rolling on the grass; both fond and faithful, complaisant and devoted. Evidently God made the dog to yield exactly that sort of pleasure to the lad, and the lad to be cheered exactly in that way by his rough canine companion. I wonder if dogs will

* Entretiens sur la Métaphysique.

have another life, as Leibnitz thought probable, who had similar hopes for all animals? It is permitted us to dream of that question more than it is possible to answer it. The speculation does not concern us unless it be to suggest, what seems pretty obvious, that it would have been better, as far as generosity is concerned, to have been born a dog than a man ignoring his Creator through the pride of science.

The Prince de Ligne, speaking of gardens, says, that for a person who is sociable like himself, in the absence of people to fill them, there must at least be animals of some sort or other. As we have been watching a dog just now, let me point at another. A little girl with a tan terrier entered the other day one of those carriages for the million, not to be always named in such heroic pages as ours, that was taking a certain excursionist out of town; and this addition to the numbers was greatly to the professed annoyance of some elderly and superbly-dressed matrons already grimly seated in it. "So there are two of you!" one of them muttered between her teeth on these two friends getting in; "well, at least keep the thing by you." The dog seemed to desire no better; so, standing on his hind legs, he looked out of the window. But unfortunately he was of an excitable disposition; the least thing in the street moved him. If he saw another dog, or a boy with a ball, he would bark and fidget about, and even work his way behind the old respectable ladies to peep through another window, as if one were not enough for him. Before going far, therefore, the passengers were pretty well acquainted with the physiology of their small companion. Still the indulgent, for two such persons had been forced into the number, were not quite prepared for what followed; for presently, if a pail of scalding water had been thrown over him, the little wretch could not have uttered a more piercing scream. He flew over the laps of the fine gowns, darted like mad from window to window, and was only saved from throwing himself out near the conductor's elbow by some one, himself an intruder, laying hold of his hind legs. This time it was not a case of scolding, but of fainting with the stately lady, who seemed to have had her forebodings from the first. She could not find breath now to utter a distinct word, it was only a short involuntary gasping. At length, half sobbing,

she said in broken syllables, "You—you naugh, naughty child; if—yes if—you loved the animal, if you had the least love for it, you would have held him tighter!" After a pause, however, recovering herself more, she said, "Well now, silly girl, can you tell us the cause of this last extraordinary paroxysm? You don't understand me? What made him do like that?" "He see father," was the child's reply. Thus did nature supply a good and merry lesson in this trait of a dog's love; and what is wanting for our purpose is the capacity for marking, learning, and admiring it. Assuredly there are some who need it, whether they will choose to profit by it or not. "For your dog," as Buffon remarks, "evinces an ardent nature, which under domestic care yields to gentle affections, to the desire of being attached to others and of pleasing them, offering its courage, its strength, its talents,—waiting for its master's orders to employ them,—consulting him, interrogating him, imploring him, and ever ready to do his will; without having the light of thought, possessing all the warmth of sentiment, more fidelity than man, more constancy in its affections; no ambition, no interest, no desire of vengeance, no fear but that of displeasing; all zeal, all ardour, all obedience." Our London lads and lasses are now singing all this in their ditty of the Dog Tray.

Watch, again, the sort of domesticity that reigns in the little river-side inn that receives you for an early breakfast, which can present what I have seen with pleasure at dawn in the court-yard of an old French hotel. Of course one can't expect to find in our little enclosures such variety as Cardan tells us could be seen in his own yard, where he kept all dive presents that had ever been made to him, so that the whole place, he says, was defiled with kids, lambs, hares, rabbits, and storks*. But still there is much to observe: first the pigeons that, by the way, will fly forty miles for a breakfast, waddle out on the window-stool, and begin, like so many beauties, as no doubt they think themselves, to dress and make sleek their plumes for the day, making their toilet thus on every gutter along the roof that serves for their bedroom window. Indeed, the historian of these fugitive guests expressly says that they attend to their appear-

* De Vita Propria, 62.

ance in a way that shows how much they wish to please, and that they study the Graces. They love society, love their fellow-creatures; they have gentle manners, no humour, no disgust, no quarrels. Their whole life is passed in love and domestic cares, sharing each other's labour, and maintaining a durable union—models for man if he would only imitate them. Then, presently, the cat, whose motives are not always discernible, steals forth blinking and staring upwards at you. You can often trace proof, at least in part, of what her enemies say of her—that she is a false character; "you can detect in her at times an innate malice, a perverse nature which age increases and education only masks. Subtle and insinuating like a knave—these animals have his address, his cunning, his taste for mischief, and for little thefts, like him, concealing their movement, dissembling their design, spying occasions, waiting, choosing secrecy the instant for action, then escaping—taking easily the customs of society, but never its heart, attached only in appearance, as one can see by their oblique ways, their equivocal eyes, never looking you in your face; in short, each but a treacherous servant, only kept through necessity, to oppose to another domestic enemy that cannot be parted with*." Well, later emerges, slowly and gravely like a jolly landlord, the fat good-humoured dog, whose acquaintance you made, perhaps, the night before; he stretches till his body seems twice its natural length, while his tail thumps the ground to salute each friendly face that looks down on him. Truly, one of these inn-yards or gardens near town offers a charming spectacle of animal life. I never see it without wishing myself the landlord. The very ducks and poultry become interesting from their habits of intimacy with the guests, though it is all to profit by them. And now, to cast a look back at the pigeons, it is pleasant to catch such a man as St. Francis de Sales employed in this manner. Let us hear him describe his serene moments. "I have had," he says, "three consolations lately. The last of them was curious enough. It had snowed, and the court-yard was white. John came and swept a place clear, and then threw some corn on it for the pigeons, who came to it all together as to their refectory, to take their food with a

* Buffon.

peace and respect truly admirable, and I amused myself watching them. You can't imagine what edification these little animals gave me. They had nothing to say, and each flew away when he had had enough, to wait for the others. When they had left vacant half of the place, a number of small birds who had been watching them came there too, and all the pigeons who were eating retired to a corner to leave a greater space for the little birds who came to table to eat, without being incommoded by the pigeons. I admired their charity; for the poor pigeons were so afraid of troubling the little birds to whom they gave alms, that they kept close together all at one end of the table. I admired too the discretion of these beggars, who only came for those alms when they saw that the pigeons were nearly at the end of their repast, and that there was enough left for them. In fine, I could not restrain my tears to see the charitable simplicity of the doves, and the confidence of the little birds in their charity. I do not know if a preacher could have affected me more. This picture of virtue did me good for the whole day*." I am afraid we should have to wait long at present to find a man, who is in the habit of corresponding with kings and emperors, occupying himself with such matters, so thoroughly after the fashion of our present race of juveniles navigating the Thames.

No doubt all this while we are supposing you within a mile or two of town, where you may think there is more of art than nature, since certainly we cannot, as in the days of Ben Jonson, associate our suburbs with very wild and rural scenery, as where he speaks of one who "would walk to St. John's Wood and Waltham Forest, 'scape by all the ponds and pits in the way, and run over two-inch bridges," though I have myself seen squirrels and owls in gardens not two miles from Hyde Park Corner, and that, too, free as in the woods or in a state of voluntary domesticity. Of course in long-vacation time there is a wider range for observation of this kind, when each of us can find himself in the position of Puntarvolo, saying, "I am a poor knight-errant, lady, that hunting in the adjacent forest, was by adventure in the pursuit of a hart brought to this place; the evening

* Lett. 324.

approaching, and being wearied, my suit is to enter your fair castle and refresh me." A visit, however brought about, to the country houses of our friends will, I admit, yield greater scope for studying nature in its less familiar form; but still, notwithstanding our local difficulties about town, and though every one may have his own predilections, I believe there are many who will prefer suburban naturalness of the kind we are alluding to, in close alliance with human operations, to any mere rural desolation through which may wander those long melancholy dykes full of forget-me-nots where there is no one to remember. The truth is, as De Quincey remarks, that "the great despisers of rural scenery, its fixed and permanent undervaluers, are rustics." Though of course your "young man from the country" will tell us that it is idle to talk of nature in or near London, he can hardly open his mouth without verifying the observation. However, let us hear him. "Flowers," he says tauntingly, "won't grow in your gardens, vegetables can't be reared for all your pains; your very blades of grass are blackened like the sheep that feed on them!" O Temple Gardens! O Chelsea and Kensington! would there were a Jules Janin to defend you against such blasphemies! At the same time, as he would say, these rustics ask us, with that amiable irony inherent in country gentlemen, if the Londoner perchance has ever seen a cow in a meadow, or a partridge in the turnips; as if forsooth we had not in the Regent's Park all the works of the divine creation, from the hyssop to the cedar, and from the golden pheasant to the common house-sparrow!

But to return to the subject now immediately before us,—the habit of watching natural and common things. An old English author, then, after telling us that he has just received a letter beginning, "This sets out to you from my summer-house upon the terrace, where I am enjoying a few hours' sunshine, the scanty sweet remains of a fine autumn," proceeds as follows: "One sees my friend in an idle hour, but at the same time in the idle hour of a wise man. Such relaxations are well. Augustus is said to have passed many of his hours with little Moorish boys at a game of marbles; and I cannot but own that I have seen with great delight one of the most celebrated authors of the last age feeding the ducks in St. James's Park. I would

earnestly recommend such innocent ways of passing a leisure hour above all to two sorts of people,—those who are uneasy from want of thought, and those who are so out of a turbulence of spirit—these last, tormentors of themselves and of governments, out of an insensibility to all the pleasures of life that are calm and innocent. How often have I wished, for the good of the nation, that several famous politicians could take pleasure in feeding ducks, or in taking an evening walk on purpose to see the sun set!"

In general, however, I must add, that people on these occasions generally desire for companion one who, after all his remarks and observations on nature, will like to rest and refresh himself in a homely way after the fashion of other mortals, at least of the old world. The race happily is not extinct.

> "Est qui nec veteris pocula Massici,
> Nec partem solido demere de die
> Spernit, nunc viridi membra sub arbuto
> Stratus, nunc ad aquæ lene caput sacræ."

In fine, it may be added, that we want in regard to nature one who loves it. You are under a slight mistake, Mr. Lackbeard, if you think that every one even in town loves it. Mercier could not bear to hear the song of a nightingale. In his book entitled "Mon Bonnet de Nuit" he cries out, addressing this sweet bird, "Tais-toi, vilaine bête!" He might keep on his nightcap long enough for us, since he was so old-fashioned as to wear one. Such a person is not the companion for us on a fine morning: let him step it elsewhere. We must have one like your saunterer of woods, stander upon hills, summer swimmer in rivers, so moulded that we cannot quarrel with him even though he should be betrayed by his enthusiasm, on finding no room on top of the omnibus,—its name will out here in spite of us,—into making a sally upon the frontiers of pedantry by crying out—

> "O rus, quando ego te aspiciam? quandoque licebit
> Nunc veterum libris, nunc somno et inertibus horis
> Ducere solicitæ jucunda oblivia vitæ?"

He must be one to whose expansive heart a public garden by

the river will seem his own property for the time being and the completion of his wishes, like him the same poet talks of—

> "Hoc erat in votis: modus agri non ita magnus,
> Hortus ubi, et tecto vicinus jugis aquæ fons,
> Et paulum sylvæ super his foret."

To all the great festivals of nature, whether of seasons or of hours, we must have imaginations and minds that will respond. Louis Ratisbonne contemplating the spring and all its benedictions, ends by a suggestive thought which will perhaps enhance the value of our present holiday in the estimation of some when they hear others disparaging it. "Now," saith he, "the poorest man walks forth dressed in the sunbeams—the air, the waters, the earth—all is poesy, and the birds sing from bough to bough." "Alas!" he adds despondingly, referring to his own countrymen since their revolution, which some think put an end to boyhood, and girlhood, and every thing else natural which used to make them so like jolly Britons, "are the spring and the summer to be only in nature, and to flourish no more in souls*?"

"Yes, truly," as the same writer says elsewhere, "we may be pardoned for loving nature, which, by the way, includes art, for art itself is nature, since nature gave the talent which employs it. The delights of art, combined with those of nature and poetry, appear to us more sacred than profane. We are not afraid of the song of the nightingale, like those we read of in certain ancient books." "We do not pretend," says another French writer, "that the love of nature can supply the place of other inspiration; but one ought to acknowledge that this love and the instruction supplied by the spectacle contradict in no manner the spiritual instruction. This revelation of the divine and infinite, made in the language of colours and harmonies of all kind, offends not the positive revelation made by tradition and by the voice of conscience. Christianity has nothing to fear from the love of nature. Religion is vast enough to comprehend all poetic sentiments, strong enough to regulate them, holy enough to sanctify them. Subordinate to the Christian faith, natural sentiments become the most powerful auxi-

* Ratis., Impressions littéraires.

liary to religion. Ascend the Alps," he continues, as if addressing himself in a particular manner to all members of the Alpine club, whom for the moment he supposes to have his faith, "indulge in all the enthusiasm inspired by the spectacle of nature on the grandest scale; the same evening, when you have returned to the valley, you will enter the church as before. Never a more fervent desire, never a greater want of adoration and love will have led you to the feet of that humble altar: you will find there all the plenitude of the exaltation that you enjoyed on the summit; you will repeat there the same prayer, you will recognize there the presence of the same God *."

You will be content, said the ancients, expressing truth even by a false word,

"——— si vivere cum Jove tendis †."

Supposing that you seize the meaning of the passage rightly, you will be content then even to die. Yet still you will to the last love those scenes and objects amidst which, for a time, your lot was cast by the Creator. From Him, as Richard of St. Victor reminds you, "all created things have their good, not alone what they are by the bare fact of their existence, but all their natural good attributes." "What exile recalled to his country," asks a French writer, "does not cast a look of emotion on the hospitable land where he has been sheltered, and would not even pass there a few more days? So when our years are prolonged, an instinctive emotion of gratitude takes hold of us. It seems as if a kind hand stopped for us the course of nature which was dragging us off. Once more a spring, once more roses, once more the corn-fields. For this soul suspended between two worlds the spectacle of nature is profoundly affecting and sweet. What beauty in the fields, in the majestic mountains, in the wooded hills! in those green meads, in those blue waters, in that light which spreads on all objects such infinite variety of tints! What a wondrous accordance in this whole! how this beauty seems but the symbol of a higher beauty ‡!" Inspired by such thoughts, our own Cowley, when contrasting his pursuits with those of others, would have found

* Le Correspondant, tom. viii. 657.
† Pers. v.
‡ Mde. Necker.

no reason to lament the apparent lowliness of the domain appointed to himself, as in the lines—

> "Whilst, alas! my tim'rous muse
> Unambitious tracks pursues;
> Does with weak unballast wings,
> About the mossy brooks and springs,
> About the trees' new blossom'd heads,
> About the gardens' painted beds,
> About the fields and flow'ry meads,
> And all inferior beauteous things,
> Like the laborious bee,
> For little drops of honey fly,
> And there with humble sweets contents her industry."

For why so diffident about his taste for little things? when even science reveals their importance. After all, as far as the sweet calm of serene hours is concerned, the microscope, which effects this purpose, seems a more suitable instrument for us to talk about than that composed of the mighty lenses which lead you onward towards infinite space. When dissolved, overwhelmed, and lost in the contemplation of the universe above us, which may however enable us the better to reconcile Moses with the discoveries, real or pretended, respecting what is contained within the crust beneath our feet, for no text rightly interpreted places bounds in any sense to infinity, either as regards the antiquity or the extent of the divine operations; but, as I say, when overpowered with the sublimity of the former spectacle, in that universe which is at our side and around us, the microscopical world, as in that within us, we can find, without losing a sense of the incommensurable dignity of the soul, the very support which we need; for there we see how the Almighty is also all good, how nature descends as well as mounts, how the little is in one sense as divine as the great, and how the eye that can embrace infinity, takes in the humblest, smallest details that minister in a degree of minuteness beyond all human powers of estimation to the life and happiness of his creatures. But how have we stumbled upon words savouring of science thus? Well, it is enough for us to love nature and to hope the best of all things. "To feel thus," as a great author says, "is to pass

the flaming bounds of telescope and microscope, and repose in serenities beyond the finite *."

However, it is time now for returning; so having taken what refreshment our mind desired, let us rise, each when we come to separate proceeding to his own house; for as Sappho says, evening brings back every thing, and therefore the boy to his mother.

"Εσπερε, πάντα φέρεις,
Φέρεις ὄϊον, φέρεις αἶγα,
Φέρεις ματερὶ παῖδα.

Comrades, let me add,—

"Be not too grave between our acts; we'll meet
Again like music and make ourselves merry."

CHAPTER VI.

NO one, of course, always knows exactly in every respect how others feel, or has a right to tell them that they should feel precisely like himself; but there are some persons at all events, for their poor part, who when they pass along the river on board the "Wedding-ring," no matter in what reach of it, and hear sweet music from under the trees, such as by a certain natural affinity puts feet in tune—such, too, as we must admit, rather bespeaks the wooing, and winning, and wedding, such as recalls the song—

"He came to me to woo me,
And he whispered low unto me,
And he knelt adown before me,
As though he would adore me.
And he said, 'Oh, can you love me,
Can you love as I love you?'
And I bent me down and told him,
How dear my heart did hold him,

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* L. Hunt, Jar of Honey.

And I blessed him, and I praised him,
And from his knees I raised him,
And I said, 'that I could love him,
Could love him as he loved me*!'"—

I say that there are persons who with such memories awakened and such images brought before, at least, their mind's eye on an excursion of this kind, and though some one may point to the very spot where "The Bride" went down off Pimlico, find it very difficult to suppose that, even without a Ulysses coming to do the thing for them, all present there will have a speedy well-merited destruction and bitter nuptials—that all will prove *ὠκύμοροί τε πικρόγαμοί τε*. They will not either find it in themselves to sympathize heart and soul with the kind of people who, on these occasions, look so terribly displeased, as if about to echo Hamlet's words, "I say we will have no more marriages: those that are married already shall live: the rest shall keep as they are," and who, while muttering this sentence, generally turn their backs upon the innocent scene which, for an hour or two, is so enlivened and raised above the frozen line of prosaic existence within those formal precincts where pride and avarice, with all the selfishness and treason in regard to truth belonging to them, have it all their own way, while contending within human breasts only as to which of the amiable pair shall conquer. Is a man wrong for thinking it or saying it? But really, when we survey the world as it is now constituted, or picture to ourselves what it would be if the projects of certain visionaries were to be realized; when we hear all the harsh, sanguinary cries of partly triumphant conspirators against the sense of all divinity, or the dark fearful predictions of those who call themselves the invisibles, and who are expecting further triumphs; and then when we enter this humble little garden, and hear the sweet lively air of the quadrille, and see young people in their moment of leisure tripping it with such grace to the strain which, combined with their movement, seems to be in perfect unison with the primitive voice and face of all creation, we feel tempted to regard the music and the dance as something very like the expression of pure goodness, in fulfilment of the law of

* Hood.

our Maker, and rendering Him honour in accordance with his attributes. Well, perhaps this is talking foolishly; we are sure to be well rated when we utter what is in our heart. Be that then as it may, there certainly are moments, and it is a fact, as the Americans say, when, putting even all this out of the question, it is a very poor compensation for a pleasant walk and a little music in the open air, with a dance or two, to be confronted with a countenance of severity or sublimity, unrequired by place, or time, or persons, and to hear from its lips sundry wise saws involving truths, which after all contain nothing but what you know already, and for which, any day, if the occasion demanded, you hope that you would be ready to lay down your life. At least there's many a poor friend who will on such occasions ask leave, though not in the number of philosophers, to laugh; when some that are, 'tis thought, will weep. For, truly, such officious interruption to one scene in the drama, in which we were all intended to play a part without knocking each other down, seems like a sheer impertinence, a thing uncalled for, out of place, out of time, out of tune—got up to answer no other end but to put every one out and complicate arrangements that were in keeping with the universal order, and satisfactory to human reason. Well, we have none of it with us now, to prey upon the life of innocent mirth and harmless pleasure, bred of gentle wit. We came to be merry, and we will be merry; and you shall stay it out, though we are not on the Elusina, the merry river that, as Aristotle tells us, dances at the sound of music, but on the Thames, who is too old to dance. But what is that to us? I am convinced that the old Crassus himself would now laugh if he were in the boat with such a party as ours. This music creeping by us upon the waters invites us with its sweet air. We have followed it, or it has drawn us rather. See, there are the steps. Make fast the boat and jump ashore. Away! the gentles are at game, and we will to our recreation. No one shall bob us out of our melody. If any one does, our melancholy upon his head! Ere we depart we'll share a bounteous time in different pleasures, for we have friends that purpose merriment.

> "And beth nought wroth, my lorde, though I play,
> For oft in game a soth I have herd say."

What a beautiful spot this is, to be sure! On a summer's night if you would dance in their round, or patiently regard their moonlight revels, you would see here the original of Longfellow's picture in "Evangeline" of arborescent rocks and arches—

"Lovely the moonlight was as it glanced and gleamed on the water,
Gleamed on the columns of cypress and cedar sustaining the arches,
Down through whose broken vaults it fell as through chinks in a ruin.
Dreamlike, and indistinct, and strange were all things around them."

But the sun is in the heavens now, and all things wear a very familiar smile. Let the lutes begin and their best voice. Here are people prepared with ecstasy, as the poor young poet David Gray desired, to

"Listen the singing of a country song,
A virelay of harmless homeliness *."

To-day we are not alone for amusement in the open air, but what's more, our thoughts are to turn directly upon it. If we are to have an orator for companion, it must be one who can lead our minds from severity to cheerfulness and laughing—"ad hilaritatem risumque," as Cicero says. I am now of all humours that have showed themselves humours. What would you? 'tis a holiday, 'tis an hour for pleasure, and for repeating the familiar lines—

"Dum licet, in rebus jucundis vive beatus,
Vive memor quam sis ævi brevis" ——

Here of course, at times, there is noise enough. As is said in the comic song, the more they cry order the more disorder every where, because the more the confusion the greater the pleasure. But there you are again saying pleasure!

"—————— what a word
Has 'scaped thy ivory fence!"

At the bare sound of it some are for exclamations, and in

* The Luggie.

Greek, too, crying out like Minerva herself referring to something else—

Ποῖόν τε ἔπος φύγεν ἕρκος ὀδόντων!

or, like the learned Lady Armande, when she hears of Henriette's intentions, they ask indignantly, "Ce vulgaire dessein vous peut monter en tête!" But what on earth's the matter with them? I see by their looks that they are contrasting us with those that they fancy we forget. Yes, at that one poor word of ours, they seem on hearing it to be in the dungeons of the martyrs, in the catacombs with the primitive Christians, in Hippo, besieged by the barbarians with St. Augustine, in the Thebaide with the hermits, or at Carthage with the confessors flying from Rome, or in the cells of the Recluse turning from the feudal persecutions. Amusement, pleasure in the open air! they cry out again and again: what an object for a Christian!—what a motive for virtue! No, my lord, only an occasional accessary! a frequent and legitimate consequence. Why, then, did you tell me, our exclaimer demands, men should live for the sake of pleasure? I did not, my lord, replies our poor number seven, turned author for the nonce. You did, sir, replies the judge, with a severe frown, as in the famous Pickwickian trial. How could I have got "object" on my notes unless you told me so, sir? Well, so it must be. Your venerable critic has sometimes a short memory, and he takes no note of caveats and protests from the beginning. It is enough for him that we utter the word "pleasure." His cheek looks pale, and on our faces he turns an eye of death. We must be renegades, Epicureans, rationalists. So here we are at it again; and one has to say with Petruchio—

"Evermore cross'd, and cross'd; nothing but cross'd!"

Any one less bent upon his project than somebody going out for the day, might be discouraged and daunted from his purpose five times over, when beginning this trip, by the difficulties and dangers proposed. But a man with the prospects of such a one is always like Achilles, whom nothing can stop, not even the voice and the tears of his horses. His mind is made up, and proceed he will, though not till he faces his opponent, and

accosts him with a little good-humoured pleasantry. You have delivered yourself fluently and plausibly, he will say to him. But not so fast, grave stranger. Don't look so blue. These are very strange vapours, and very idle vapours, I assure you. We don't understand each other. You and I have not eaten a bushel of salt yet; in time we may be agreed. You shall be the third Cato, at first; gramercy, thou shalt be doctor o' the boat. Well, but please to observe that we do not love to hear innocents abused,—that there is a season for all things; and, when heaven pleases, an occasion for all things. But no; be it as you wish, you have done it for this once. I am not going to dispute any of your assertions. I have no heart for it just now. You have awakened memories! "Yes, yes," as a great thinker says, "it is a fearful thing to be happy. How contented one feels! How one fancies that this is sufficient! How, being in possession thus of the false end of life—happiness, one forgets the true end—duty! Still, be not displeased with the sprightly people present. Let us have pity," he adds, "for the unfortunate, but nevertheless indulgence also for the happy." However, gentle reader, you may not have been struck down as I have been, and this is too serious for to-day. Avaunt, these thoughts! Let me have pardon for replying to our Cato now with pleasantry, though still with truth. Be assured then, I will say to him, that others as well as yourself have studied and contemplated the affecting and heroic scenes and personages which by a rather violent and voluntary reaction, as it seems to me, somewhat uncalled for, are now brought to your field of vision; and yet not the less are they disposed to accompany us on our proposed excursion to-day; and a regular expedition we'll make of it, let me tell you; being neither on the rack nor in prison, nor in the bonds from which the Chosen Vessel wished that all others but himself might be free. So they are for using their liberty, and might proceed on at once without heeding you, though your pure zeal teach, preach, huff, puff, and muff at it, but that they are unwilling, if they can help it, to leave any one behind them indignant or mistrustful. Besides, they can never laugh very long. At the bottom these poor pals of ours are serious observers of all things. They will repeat it therefore once for all, that they are not by any means, as you seem to apprehend, in-

clined to uphold a proposition the counter part to that of the Stoics, and to say that a man should abjure virtue for ever in order to be delivered from pain *, and that they want the whole of human life to become a perpetual gaudeamus. It would be very well if we could get it to be so; but we can't get it. Come, let us speak "scholarly and wisely," as mine host says. Then to satisfy you, omitting however reference to higher things that need not be dragged in here, I'll repeat what Cicero said to the Epicureans. He said to them, "If I can show that any thing of virtue is to be sought for on account of itself and for its own sake, 'jacere vestra omnia.'" Now still, without alluding to higher motives, we said enough before to have convinced you, if you were reasonable, that we hold only with those who are assured that they can do that abundantly. It follows, therefore, even without our making a full profession, that you need not ascribe to us the absurd attempt to rebuild a system which, as far as reason is concerned, is for ever overthrown and demolished to atoms. No, truly, as that wise man said, "Nothing seems to us more absurd than to suppose that such a divine animal as man, a sort of mortal god on earth, (they are his words,) should have been born only to lead the life of cattle between taking food, rest, and pleasure." No one here is proposing that our young people should act like poor "man" in the Auto of Calderon de la Barca, and discard "generous Understanding," that "pilot of this mystic boat,"—that they should invite their senses, Taste, Touch, Smell, Hearing, Sight, to lead the way without it, and follow whatever road they may desire to take through an enchanted region amidst all "the sorceries of sin." No. We believe, on the contrary, that understanding does not always speak words of woe to cast needless shadows on their path; and we revere no one who would not charge them to cling to its superior guidance while not renouncing their gracious company.

"Sperne voluptates; nocet empta dolore voluptas †."

Largely interpreted, the poet's line seems to embrace every thing which the subject requires. But that all pleasure is not perverse

* De Finibus, v. † De Finibus, ii.

seems self-evident. John du Rozier, superior of the convent of the Minims of the Holy Trinity at Rome, in his curious commentary on St. Chrysostom, which book he entitles "The Consolation of Honest People," expressly indeed says that it is a great mistake to pretend, as some do, that we can live without having sensible and corporal pleasure; he maintains that the Author of nature has joined pleasure to certain actions for our encouragement; and he concludes saying, "certainly such satisfaction ought not to be esteemed evil, but purely innocent*." Well, so much for that matter. Rather a queer beginning again, is it not, for a day's pleasure? But these concessions being made, though we may have been pleading against a graver bench than ever frowned in Greece; and though, perhaps, it would have been better to have met on setting out three magpies flying against the wind from south to north, or have seen a poplar struck by lightning, or last evening have trod on a spider, than to have incurred the necessity of speaking with such wisdom on a morning sweet as this, let us proceed hopefully, and feel confident that our pupil will turn out a great proficient. We must take leave, therefore, now to persevere in our resolution, and seek other company; so away with your mattery sentences, they are too grave and wise for this meeting; for, in fine, it is foul weather in us all, when some are cloudy; and, as Madame de Sévigné wrote to her amiable cousin, De Coulanges, "in order to have joy, one must have joyous companions: you know," she added, as if speaking expressly for us, "that I at least am what any one wishes, and incapable of inventing any thing." So, come now, a truce to the sublime; we have heard good lessons, but let them finish. Let us hear and see something of your merry lads that can sing, play gambols, and do feats as river birds, river musicians, river poets. The morn is bright,—as Longfellow says,

> "There is that nameless splendour every where,
> That wild exhilaration in the air,
> Which makes the passers in the city street
> Congratulate each other as they meet."

To-day we are all agreed, as Montaigne says, "de galler le bon

* La Consolation des Honnestes Gens, p. 126.

temps," or, in plain English, to have as much mirth as would fill up a week of holidays. We are all for songs now, so let philosophers be silent; we are for all manner of fun, so don't be teasing us with discussions in such a moment as this. Business is business; we will reign in our pleasures, and we will cudgel thee to death if thou find fault with us; and as for those, look you, who are morose and silent, made nervous by the sunshine, saddened by a lively crowd, afflicted by the spectacle of amusement, who, as Janin says of certain Germans, mount guard before ideas, before hopes, before enjoyment, why let them even remain where a congenial atmosphere surrounds them. Was there ever such a self-affliction, and so impertinent? Well, they have good leave to leave us; when we need their use and counsel we shall send for them. We depart for the nonce, with nothing on our tongue, perhaps, but

> "Lætus in præsens animus, quod ultra est
> Oderit curare, et amara lento
> Temperet risu" ———

One ought to beg pardon, I know, for all this Latin, but, as Jules Janin says, when a man is in good humour, he is such a pedant! Though, after all, where is the pedantry in citing lines like these, or, at least, is it comparable to what is involved in the clever, malignant, pure Saxon of our critical writers, so gravely and pompously treating on the common topics of each day in the style that best suits a college combination-room, which, with all its ungainly efforts to be grimly pleasant, has never yet made smile boy or girl, or, for that matter, perhaps, wise man either? We depart too, let me tell you, not necessarily amerced of all respectable and thoughtful companions. No, certainly, by no means; and, to confess the truth, this is sometimes a fortunate circumstance, since our friends are not always so wise as nature might have made them; for, as Philippe de Commines says very sagely, and as if he had often made one in parties of this kind, where every one has not yet his wise tooth fully developed, "un sage homme sert bien en une telle compagnie." But do me the honour to believe that we are not always accompanied exclusively by people unfit to name in a grave presence. Not to speak of those who would like to hear

about the seven wise men making such parties as they did, in order to correct the natural moroseness of old age, as Athenæus tells us, we may have, glad to join us, another Cicero, and a Cicero turned Christian too—not only rendered more learned by the cheerful conversation of his companions, but also more audacious to indulge in jokes—"audacior ad jocandum;" not fearing to be thought inconsistent or frivolous under his new banner by imitating what is related of the Fabricii, the Africani, the Maximi, and the Lepidi under his old one*. Neither is this all. Does not the grave and learned De Thou describe his picnic in Gascony, where, in the freedom of the repast, at which by the way he says the oysters were of such flavour that one of the party swallowed more than a hundred of them, the conversation turned on the beauty of the spot, on its historical associations, and on the great men of antiquity who used to enjoy such honest leisure without thinking it unworthy of them†? Was it not the practice of Huet, the learned bishop of Avranches, never to let the month of May pass without paying some tribute to that beautiful season, either by a fresh reading of Theocritus, or having some rural entertainment,—"minutis et rorantibus poculis;" a little frugal repast upon the grass, as he used to say himself, "non multi cibi sed multi joci?" You look serious at his name, perhaps, and shake your head. Well, we may have others to accompany us against whom you can have nothing to insinuate. Does not Marguerite de Valois, in her Mémoires, speak of her evenings on the Meuse listening to music on the river? Do we not read of Laura, that mirror of modesty, organizing a water-party on the Rhone with a dozen of her friends, being obliged, however, to return by land in a kind of chariot, or, as we should call it, a cart, as the stream was too rapid for their boat to get back against it? Did she not sing to them while seated in the boat and in the cart, filling Petrarch with such rapture,—though, silly fellow, he only looked on from a distance,—that he broke forth in the words of the celebrated sonnet beginning "Dodici, donne," &c.? No, never, he says, did the human eye behold any thing like it. On a vessel without a mast, or sail, or ropes, I have seen twelve

* De Oratore, ii. † Mem. ad An. 1582.

beauties,—what do I say? twelve stars, and the sun in the midst of them. The names of the whole party have even come down to us as an example, for they belonged to the most virtuous and noble families of Provence; there was Briande d'Agoult, countess of Luna, Huguette de Forcalquier, Amable de Villeneuve, Beatrix d'Agoult, Isoarde de Roqueville, Anne, vicomtesse de Tallard, Blanche de Flassans, Donce de Monstiers, Antoinette de Cadenet, Magdelaine de Sallon, Rixende de Puiverd, and Phanette de Sade, Laura's aunt. In reading the list you must admit that boating parties, merely for the sake of the thing in an unluxurious way, are sometimes composed of good company; though, if we can't always command such fine names, I see no reason either why we should be snubbed. Then, again, has not the great Dante, though apparently so grave a personage from his youth, left a delightful sonnet, in which he talks of going on a boat-party with some friends, in a style that Hazlitt qualifies as "very amiable and companionable?" How many poets, scholars, and religious men even of Dantesque character have been known to join such a party as ours? Go along with you! Fenelon's priest, in Telemachus, who so loved the young, was, with all his prudence, gay, complaisant, and as joyous as any juvenile. If we cannot boast of having with us a sage Daliarte, from whom it is bootless to think of keeping secret any thing, it may be a man of this character,—who knows? perhaps a missionary priest, as nobly minded as he is obscure; or one by no means obscure, but of authority elsewhere, and cardinalable, as Montaigne says; it may be a kind of Christian Pliny, a match for the new Cicero we just alluded to, that will make one of the party of living ballads; for, as Shirley says in the dedication of his Politician, "there are left many lovers of this exiled poesy in action, who are great masters of reason, and that dare conscientiously own this musical part of human learning, and of human life, when it is presented without the stains of impudence and profanation."

But where are we going? and what is to be the pleasure? To reply will occupy us for some time as we now rest on this slope, or later row or ramble on. We have disposed of the grave objectors and are quit of them; but there are merry objectors when we propose a day on the river, whose arguments

must be traced to what I make bold to call "perverse and ill-conditioned minds." "Who ever heard," asks a celebrated and facetious author, "of a successful water-party? We have been on water excursions out of number, but we solemnly declare that we cannot call to mind one single occasion of this kind which was not marked by more miseries than any one would suppose could reasonably be crowded into the space of some eight or nine hours. Something has always gone wrong. The gentlemen who volunteered to row have been out of practice, and performed many alarming evolutions, putting their oars down into the water, and not being able to get them up again, or taking terrific pulls without putting them in at all; in either case pitching over on the backs of their heads with startling violence, and exhibiting the soles of their pumps to the sitters in the boat in a very humiliating way." Against all these casualties, as far as we are concerned, we thought sufficient provision had been made long ago, by stipulating for a competent skill in our companions; but as there is no accounting for tastes, let us not be exclusive, but profess our willingness for to-day to accept of any land pleasure that may be preferred. Let us see what attractions there may be elsewhere. Well, it must be admitted, there is no want of them let us be where we may. In fact, hardly any thing is required for the enjoyment we have in view that is not within every body's reach. We need not displace any one; we are not like two marquises who, as Molière says, require a good deal of ground for their persons. A very small space will do for us. "Tout est aux écoliers couchette et matelas." Let us only have a sheltered corner, or the side of a hedge, or a slope on the road-side, and our serene disputations may be opened in great state without the need of any "précieuse" calling out to a laquais, "Vite, voiturez-nous ici les commodités de la conversation." But, of course, there are some sites more than others peculiarly adapted for the sort of thing.

Vienna, for instance, has its Prater, Dresden its Gehaya, Madrid its park of Buen Retiro, which, without having seen, I must not omit through regard for its name; Munich its gardens of Montgelas, from which you see the Alps of the Tyrol; Lucerne and Freybourg, each its delicious cliffs and fields, "full of old saints and new hay," as some one very happily expresses it, hitting

the thing exactly, for they seem to be always mowing there. Venice offers you its turreted islands, Ferrara its sweet cloisters, Bologna its arcades upon the mountain, Rome its vineyards and fountains, while Paris and London have their smiling environs in almost every direction; Montmorency engarlanded with cherries, Hampstead and its picturesque heath, Fontenay in its enclosure of roses, Primrose Hill and its adjacent meadows, St. Germain and its forest, Richmond and its park and terrace, Romainville and its lilacs, Twickenham and its cedars, Versailles and Hampton Court with their trim stately pleasure-grounds, so formed, as Milton says, for leisure; and bearing so close a resemblance to those which were laid out by Urganda herself for her own enjoyment, as we read in the authentic pages of so many chivalrous books; you have, in short, woods, and slopes, and gardens without end: to whichever side you turn, nowhere can we be at a loss to find a favourable site for enjoying what, for want of a better term, we designate as serene hours on the Thames, while admitting that these may be obtained any where, even under the most apparently adverse and inappropriate circumstances, and by men, too, who, as Homer would say, neither know the river nor its banks, neither its shallows and depths, nor its creeks and harbours, neither the yellow oak-stained boat, nor bending oars, which are its wings. We are willing to follow men so ignorant of all water exigencies, that they would take the first lock they came to for the bathing-place that they may have heard others talk of, as, in fact, though you need not mention it, it does sometimes prove to be for a few awkward ones, though not exactly in their sense of the term. There is hardly a town of any size in France or Switzerland, in the south of Germany, or the north of Italy, where one at least of our excursionists could not lead to the exact spot, both for swimming and philosophizing in the sun or shade—spot, by the way, which you will find indicated in no guide-book, though it is my decided conviction that many a wanderer might desire such information more than much that he finds in it. How Pliny loved his villa on the lake of Como! the vernal portico, the shady plane-tree walk, the crystal canals so agreeably winding along its flowery banks, together with the charming lake below, as also the elegant apartments for repose both at noon and night! "Leave, my

friend," he writes to Caninius Rufus, "the sordid pursuits of life to others, and devote yourself in this calm retreat to pleasures of the studious kind. Let these employ your idle as well as serious hours, your business and your amusement."

All the world can't be so highly favoured in this respect as Pliny. Our Eel Pie Island at Twickenham, our Spaniard's at Hampstead, our friend Kemp's little port at Teddington, all "enfolding sunny spots of greenery," and even Bachelors' Hall itself, did we dare to think of landing at it, would cut but a sorry figure, I am afraid, by the side of these villas of the old Romans; and yet our people, too, though inhabiting a garret, might if they pleased, by aid of a little fancy, have out of town their tragic and their comic villa, each recommended by different kinds of beauty. It would not be the true thing precisely, but there is a certain resemblance, and one might dream the rest. Our Five Bells at Ousley, standing solitary at the skirts of solemn woods, might, without deriving its title from any financial disaster consequent on visiting it, which never is the case there, lay claim to the dignity of the former; while the Sun at Kingston, with its garden to the river, and its terrace, from which I am now watching at sunrise a boy rowing up and down his little sister amidst a sort of channel fleet of swans watching them, can offer all the advantages implied in the latter title, if you do not prefer the Ship at Halliford, where in July you may come in for a rustic fête, the dance and the song, a club feast, but one admitting all comers. Within a short row of the Sun are grounds where one may indulge in the charms of nature combined with a pompous cultivation, in a place peopled with august memorials of art, alike attractive to gay holiday crowds and to the lover of poetic solitude; where may be experienced the pleasures invoked by André Chénier in that most harmonious of his odes, beginning—

"O Versaille, ô bois, ô portiques!
Marbres vivants, berceaux antiques
Par les Graces et les rois Elysée embelli,
A ton aspect dans ma pensée,
Comme sur l'herbe aride une fraîche rosée
Coule un peu de calme et d'oubli."

When the gardens of the Tuileries were finished, for you can be serene even there within sound of the carriages just as you can in the Regent's Park while hearing the lions roar, Colbert took Perrault to see them, and expressed his intention of keeping them private for the king, adding, that, if the people were admitted, they would ruin them in no time. "This resolution," says Perrault, "afflicted me. I said," he tells us, "be assured, Monsieur, that not even the little children of the common people would touch a flower here. Artisans and their families will respect the place; some will come for air recovering from illness, others to walk for pleasure, others to talk of marriages and things that are more properly discussed in a garden than in a church. I am convinced that this place was made for children and young people of all conditions. M. Colbert, after gazing all round it, and hearing from the gardeners that it was just as I represented, gave his orders, and there was no more mention of closing the gates to the public. I confess I was overjoyed." "How well," says Sainte-Beuve, "did this joy agree with the amiable ideas that one forms of the enchanter of children, the author of the fairy tales!" But to return to London, for many, after all,

> "——— mother of arts
> And quietness, native to famous wits,
> Or hospitable, in her sweet recess,
> City or suburban, studious walks and shades."

Nearer town are gardens where, if you have any inclination to see things as they are intended to be looked at, you behold a scene to take your eye with positive wonder; there you have a forest, a lake, and the sublimity of snow-capp'd Alps, with Swiss cottages brought to the edge of the real green lawn on which you stand. There at times, it is said, is music to charm Orpheus himself into a stone; there you have the pleasure of looking down upon a natural river where, if mermaids do not pass to and fro, swans die along the shores, and sing, or, if wild, would sing, as in St. James's Park, their own dirges; and very mournful and suggestive sounds they would use, too, for the purpose, whatever may be said by the French Academician, who treats on the causes why swans that used formerly to sing,

in our days are such wretched performers, and who concludes by laughing at the grave ancients, saying, why would not a nightingale or a lark serve their turn better than a swan, whose most important occupation—"est de barboler dans la fange d'un canal," to root about in the mud for the sake of catching some vile insect or some unhappy little fish*? However, that point does not concern us at present. Return to question, as the merry song says.

It unfortunately happens somehow to be the opinion at present in certain circles, that not merely all respectable people ought to look down on common gardens, but that such places should be absolutely ignored or execrated, as tending to foster some of the very worst features of our national character. Is it, I wonder, for the reason that places of this kind are of such an old origin, and that upstarts shrink from any thing that savours of antiquity? The sweetness of air, the pleasantness of smells, the verdure of plants, the exercises of running about in them, or walking, and the delight of being seated in them, have recommended them to people of natural tastes from the first, after Chaos had subsided into a little order, insomuch that Sir William Temple says, without going back to Eden, that "the use of gardens seems to have been the most ancient and most general of any sorts of cultivation among mankind, and to have preceded that of corn or of cattle†." It is worth remarking, that the pleasure-grounds of Pliny's Tuscan villa seem to have resembled some of our own suburban paradises. This refined Roman praises its "circular walks lined with roses, and its cypress-trees to cast a deeper gloom, yielding a pleasing contrast between the coolness of the shade and the warmth of the sunny exposures." He speaks of walks divided by box hedges, leading to a little open space like a meadow. "Then," he says, "the box is cut into a thousand different forms, sometimes into letters expressing the name of the master; here and there little obelisks rise intermixed with fruit-trees; then, in the midst of this elegant regularity,"—that's his term for it,—"you are surprised with an imitation of the negligent beauties of rural nature.

* Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscr. tom. vii.

† Miscel. p. 11.

Beyond is a walk, where the trees are cut into a variety of shapes, and at the upper end is an alcove of white marble shaded with vines. Before it you have a fountain, from which the water by pipes is forced into the air, falling again into a marble basin. Then, to crown all, there is a little private recess furnished with a couch, where you may recline, and fancy yourself in a wood, while in different quarters are disposed marble seats."

We are not on the quest of solitude to-day, let the site be ever so inviting; for we are not exactly those who shut themselves up within doors, precisely because it is a day when no man thinks he has business at his house. Yesterday, let us suppose, every one heard a notice which we must freely translate, making the proper substitution of name, and occasion, and words, like that given by the poet,

> "———— Cras nato Cæsare festus
> Dat veniam somnumque dies; impune licebit
> Æstivam sermone benigno tendere noctem."

And each of us, no doubt, last night, claiming our "droit de promenade," as the French say, added with him—

> "Quo mihi fortunas, si non conceditur uti?"

Imogen's charge was then repeated in an under-tone at many bedroom doors—

> "If thou canst awake by four o' the clock,
> I prithee call me."

There was not much sleep thinking of it, and the first awakening this morning was "savoury," as the Duc de Saint-Simon says. "Good heaven!" Oldrent would exclaim, "how merry they are!" Nor can we wonder, especially if it be to us as to many, the "alba dies" that comes but once or twice a year, to keep which and give it honour due they, if they have not pinched close and worked hard, have had many difficulties of one kind or another to overcome. So now we see the whole town, "white folks," as the song says, "wise, foolish, short, and tall,"

> "As full of spirit as the month of May,
> And gorgeous as the sun at midsummer."

As in old Chaucer's time, the "prentys of our citee" will not be behindhand,—

> "For when there any riding was in Cheap,
> Out of the shop thider would he leap,
> And till he hadde all that sight i-seen
> And danced well, he would not come again;
> And gather'd him a meyné of his sort,
> To hop and sing and make great disport."

All this, at least, may be very well and becoming, and indeed, without offence, or odour of vile Paganism, classic and antique too. The being prevented from frequenting places for public recreation must have seemed to Sophocles for one as no small source of affliction, since he represents Œdipus, when lamenting the fate of his daughters, complaining of it as the climax of their misfortunes, saying, "For you I weep; for to what social meetings of the citizens will ye come? Nay, to what festivals whence ye will not betake yourselves home all in tears in place of enjoyment from the scene?" Associations and feelings of this kind still exist in minds, though they are not much thought of by that stately class of people who might be said, like ladies of the feudal time, to have been born and bred in one castle, only to get married and die in another castle. The Prince de Ligne, in his celebrated treatise on gardens, entitled "Coup-d'œil sur Belœil," shows himself sociable even in his hours of retreat; for he rather desires his gardens to be close to a great capital, and that they should have always many persons in them. "I like," he says, "to meet people in them walking about; for I love to see them; and, in fact, I lately parted with a Salvator Rosa almost for nothing because the picture was all a desert; and deserts have the air of annihilation. A picture without figures is like the end of the world." Chateaubriand, among his sage counsels to persons who are unhappy, lays down for one rule that they ought to avoid public gardens. Of course we had to expect as much in such a treatise; but for all that, so little does he seem impressed with the wisdom of his own advice, that elsewhere he recommends to all the world to exchange solitude for human society. "Gardens," he says, "of themselves speak but little. In order that this nature may interest us we must

attach to it the memories of society. We do not suffice to ourselves; and we have need of those conversations, qui se font le soir à voix basse entre des amis." He was thinking no doubt of the lines of Delille—

> "S'il est longtemps désert, le plus aimable lieu
> Ne me plaît pas longtemps; les arbres parlent peu."

Alas! alas! what are the trees if those you loved who had sat under them along with you are now gone!

The need, however, of seeing and hearing human beings is in fact so powerful that we find traces of its existence even in the stately melancholy court of Philip the Fifth. Speaking of the palace of Saint Ildephonso among the mountains at La Granja, the Duc de Saint-Simon, whose taste in this instance I admit may have misled him, says, "It would be difficult to find a more disagreeable situation, or to have succeeded better in rendering it dismal, not to say fearful. Adjoining it, and within view of the royal apartments, is a great building with courts to serve for the equipages, and other common offices, as also for lodging the gentlemen and attendants of the court. I expressed my surprise to the queen at the close proximity of this building, but she replied that they liked to hear the noise, and to see the people going and coming. The secret intention, which I could not fully comprehend at the time, was to enliven their retreat a little by hearing and seeing the world near them*." Well, to return to our places of public resort. Amusement, then, of a kind thus ancient, and resembling that on the Continent, was what we had in view when we projected this trip. "Hoc erat in votis!" London is twenty-one for this day, and we start with London. Now, without wishing to offend our stately formal people, who will keep far enough away I promise you, what, I would ask, does this sort of recreation imply? A writer in a Quarterly Review will tell us. "The amusements on the Continent," saith he, "consist in promenades and musical concerts, in beautiful and tastily laid-out public gardens, where all classes of society meet on pleasant evenings, mingle on terms of equality, and, dropping the rigid forms of social etiquette, give

* Mém. tom. xix. 276.

way to cheerful and refined enjoyment. Now, it is to bring about the same state of things in England that the best and wisest men would co-operate, as in the instance cited by Brownson of Kay and others." There are gardens, therefore, where sweet on the summer air is the odour of flowers, where, too, as the innocent poet Dyer says—

> "Grass and flowers Quiet treads,
> Far from the haunts of troubled heads,
> Along with Pleasure close ally'd,
> Ever by each other's side."

Arcades, too, there are, and shady walks, where we bring our music forth into the air, in order that others besides Athenian citizens "may trip it elegantly through a pure air; and groves so beautiful that you might suppose the golden-haired Harmonia had there given birth to the chaste nine Pierian Muses;" or, if you seek less subtle recreation, where we can all enjoy what Pliny, as if to shame some of us who come so long after him, describes, on occasion of his being invited "to Cæsar's table,—a board spread with much plainness and simplicity, where we are entertained either with interludes or pass the evening in the most pleasing conversation."

> "Et je ne vois rien là, si j'en puis raisonner,
> Qui blesse la pensée, et fasse frissoner."

Let your proud Stoic know that here are no places fearing the ædile—"loca ædilem metuentia," that the pleasure which we invoke is found here like virtue itself, as he describes it, "pulverulentam, coloratam, callosas habentem manus *."

However, I foresee a third sort of opposition to our projects; for there being no "mulberry or any other gardens, indeed, now for your great people of fashion †," all that we propose for the nonce will be set down as indicating a vitiated taste. The refinement of Nerva or Trajan's suppers might pass,—some grave persons, knowing very little about the river or the heath, will reply, "But our London popular amusements! Our own holiday-folk! who—

* Sen., De Vita Beata.

† Leigh Hunt, A Saunter through the West End.

'Do nothing but eat, and make good cheer,
And praise heaven for the merry year!'"

Aye, just so. These are the fastidious objectors. Well, we can't be expected to go about noiselessly as spirits; and besides, as Speed says, "though the cameleon can feed on the air, we are such that are nourished by our victuals, and would fain have meat." You, of course, "do want only as much bread as would dine a sparrow, or as much drink as would fox a fly." But though the myrmidons are no bottle-ale houses, they do well enough at table if they be disposed; and, as Garrick said of old—

"Whate'er new gusto for a time may reign,
Shakspeare and beef must have their turn again."

To use Corin's words, "as this is a spare life in the fields, look you, it fits our humour well; but as there is no more plenty in it, at times it goes much against our stomach." At least, our needful preliminary for philosophizing is still that of Homer's good fellows,

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πόσιος καὶ ἐδητύος ἐξ ἔρον ἔντο.

For ofttimes we are faint, and cannot travel farther without meat, and as for potations, come, come! good wine is a good familiar, if it be well used, however some may exclaim against it. We must have enough to eat and drink before we can even talk, and for most of us that enough means but little; too much does not enter within the limits of our worst fears. Ulpian, indeed, used to say on occasions of this kind, that he was willing to have nothing to eat as long as he might talk, to whose sentiments Myrtilus subscribed; but we are not disposed to do so, remembering too well how often we are more ready to say, as in the "Breezes of Metagenes,"

"But, my friend, now let us dine,
After that ask what you choose,
For at present, I'm so hungry,
I can't recollect a thing *."

All this, no doubt, is shocking vulgar, though Louis XIV.

* Athen. ix.

himself, as the Duc de Saint-Simon tells us, when he went a-pleasuring used always, like any common good fellow, to see that there were refreshments provided to be taken with them; and, before he had gone a quarter of a league, he used to ask if people were not ready to eat and partake of them. To be sure, the company here are not exactly such as filled the king's carriages on those occasions; but what then? A writer in the Tatler, addressing himself to the highest classes, describes a party resolved on going to see a merry meeting in a humble locality, being naturally pleased with the survey of human life in all its degrees and circumstances. But times are changed, we shall be reminded; and no one, the majority of mankind is a thing that does not exist, in our times would think of going to such places. Now, this sort of reflection makes one a little angry; one does not know whether one should be eloquent or silent. For, if this were said by some of the great hospitable seigneurs of Italy, whose gardens are public gardens, we might be inclined to listen and to thank them; the Durazzi's, the Brignoli's, the Balbi's, the Borghese's, the Doria's might be expected to propose for us all something still more beautiful than what we near London possess,—but you—! Well, do pray keep away, and adopt these pitiful upstart notions. Declaim against the age because, though ten to one you yourself "never had a grandfather," it favours more equality. Do fret, gall thy heart-strings till they break. We need not your company.

After all, perhaps it is hardly necessary for us to think of answering these last objections; it has been lately done for us. Hear how a distinguished French nobleman writes about us. "He who has not seen the Derby-day," and he might have cited a gathering on Hampstead Heath, "has not seen England, and so people repeat the saying, that the English don't know how to amuse themselves; but whoever returns from these green downs, after a fine spring day, with the 300,000 inhabitants of London of all ranks, will be convinced of two things seldom admitted; first, of the honest and expansive gaiety of the great majority, and, secondly, of the spirit of equality which, at least on this day, unites together the most different classes of society. There is a gaiety, a good humour, and a decency similar to what distinguishes so honourably our

popular masses at their periodical amusements. Amidst this joyous and animated crowd you might imagine yourself in France, only that all is done by private industry without the intervention of government. There is no disorder, no need of the police, and, in fact, one sees no quarrelling, and no resisting of authority however simple be its form. It is a charming spectacle,—that interminable series of suburban villas with their balconies of flowers and gardens,—that innumerable and joyous crowd so remarkable for the beauty of its women and children, and for the general air of contentment and sympathy spread over all faces. It leaves on the mind an ineffaceable memory of a true popular festivity sprung from the spontaneous impulsion of its actors, and ennobled by the manly intelligence of a people which knows, not only how to govern itself, but also how to amuse itself alone*."

But let us enter more into the interior of minds, and observe what is required for such hours as we have, not only to enjoy, but to analyze. "Count as so much gained the fortune of each day," says the poet,

> "——— nec dulces Camœnas
> Sperne, puer, neque tu choreas,
> Donec virenti canities abest
> Morosa."

I hope that you will admit that there are moments when, whatever be our profession, we all admire and require a little mirth. The grave Fortescue, writing in the time of Henry VII., gives us a piece of information which is quite in point, if this proposition should be disputed. "There is," saith he, "both in the inns of court and the inns of Chancery, a sort of academy or gymnasium, fit for persons of the rank of students, where they learn singing and all kinds of music, dancing, and such other accomplishments and diversions called revels as are suitable to their quality." The times are a little altered, it must be admitted, since instruction in singing and dancing formed part of an educational course for law students. The circumstances of the world are now requiring reunions of rather a dif-

* Montalembert, le Correspondant, tom. ix. p. 251.

ferent kind, not at least more redolent of serenity. We are, besides, a steady and matter-of-fact sort of people now, as a celebrated author says, and even if rifles were not required to be in every hand, as in "the Devil's own," "dancing on May-day being beneath our dignity, we give it up, and it descends to the sweeps." There are apparently more victims now than formerly to whom are denied, even in their own chamber, any of the enjoyments of a serene hour; for hear Cowley, rather, in this instance, a prophet than a narrator:—

"'Tis morning; well, I fain would yet sleep on.
You cannot now, you must begone
To court, or to the noisy hall;
Besides, the rooms without are crowded all.
The stream of business does begin,
And a spring-tide of clients is come in.
Ah! cruel guards, which this poor pris'ner keep!
Will they not suffer him to sleep?
Make an escape, out at the postern fly,
And get some blessed hours of liberty.
To thy bent mind some relaxation give,
And steal one day out of thy life to live.
Oh, happy man! he cries, to whom kind heav'n
Has such a freedom always giv'n!
Why, mighty Madman! what should hinder thee,
From being ev'ry day as free?"

However, this no doubt represents an exceptional position Intervals of amusement belong to every one; and few woul altogether and formally abrogate such things. Indeed, in former times of Christianity, the gravest and most devout people thought them not unsuitable to men even in their declining years, as when Mme. de Maintenon wrote to a friend, saying, "You did your duty in your youth. Pass your old age in mirth and serenity. Enjoy every thing as a good man; and prepare yourself for death with as much gaiety as possible." Perhaps so much will be conceded, though I hardly think it, for sourness seems to be held the best specific. But then I want you to admit more than this; I want you to grant a liberal charter, on the principle of many things being useful to the mind, even though they are but done in holiday foolery, when "that

sport best pleases that doth least know how." We must shut our eyes very tight not to perceive indications that God has intended that there should be sunny spots in the heart; that there should still be such a thing as the laugh of the golden age, as a joy for some five minutes in the day almost boundless, escorted by good sense in a mask. Oh, give us the delightful, hearty, loving laugh of that girl who sits watching the children in the park tumbling head over heels, forgetful of every thing else in her innocent ecstasy, while causing the little droll aspirants to that perfection to feel fresh zest in their own mad play, and even the grave bystanders to turn round and smile with her! But generally, whether off the river or on it, the only thing any one can charge our ramblers with, would be that to which Sydney Smith pleaded guilty, "high spirits and much innocent nonsense." Foolery, sir, does walk about the orb like the sun, it shines every where. How well, how gracefully, even amidst mishaps, can the children bask in it! Too long, as he thought, a mere inlander, a certain boy I knew was seized one afternoon with an ardour for the art of navigation; that was his notion of a serene hour. He and his youngest brother, seven years old, laid their heads together; the result was, their being seen going down to the pond at the bottom of the garden carrying a tub. The eldest promised the youngest that if he let him make the first voyage he should make the next. This was agreed upon. The treaty was made; and it was not the will that was wanting to see it executed to the letter. So he got into the tub; the little one, all delight, all hope, gazed from the shore, when lo! half-way across, the Leviathan fell over, and the navigator was up to his chin. The tub remained where it fell. By mutual consent the treaty was understood to be cancelled, and the two powers had to make their way back, both of them looking as much discomforted as if they had been shareholders in a defunct speculation, though one of them had not a hair turned. Thus did they enact on a summer's morning a legitimate farce, which, as dramatic guides say, "commences in a postulate that must be granted." Will you have more poetic foolery? Well, remember that we have all of us an imperious want of escaping from real life by the deceptions of art, and that, as some one says, "the more it lies, the more it amuses

us." The eldest brother of these two heroes then bought two ship's pulleys. What for? You could never guess, till you saw him climb up into a tree and fasten them to a branch near the top, to which he then proceeded to elevate the brother next in age to himself, no persuasion being needed, for both were like Hercules,

"Still climbing trees in the Hesperides."

The branch, however, giving way, put an end to that serene life among the upper foliage; for down falls the aspirant, whose feet, strange to say, passed right through the bottom of a bucket that stood reversed beneath the tree, without his being much injured. This time, therefore, you have, more than farce, the old comedy, consisting in a fantastic world; not that of the new comedy, "restraining," as Coleridge remarks, "the creative activity both of the fancy and the imagination, while indemnifying the understanding in appealing to the judgment*."

Well, let us return to people fuller grown. The joy of others, alas! for some is but a memory. Yet how often, in these elder persons, is it still the same spirit under even the same form! We might cite many instances, however distrustful of the reception prepared for each; and to say the truth, for both young and old, all the little pleasures of a serene hour are humble and tremblingly sensitive things; as Jules Janin says, "a mere nothing can frighten them away, a mere nothing calm them." How shall philosophy be expected to apologize for an idle fellow who takes a long walk into the country merely to pluck a branch of May, or to bring home a bunch of violets for some one? And we have things lighter still to commemorate. Used not Johnson to touch the posts in the street as he walked along, or resolve, like a boy, not to place his foot on the juncture of the flags? In moments of exuberant joy, in critical moments, when one hopes to have escaped some terrible calamity, it is to the same juvenile foolery that one has recourse to find the exact expression for it. The last gleam of joy and hope that Marie Antoinette experienced was the departure for Varennes. At midnight, crossing the Carousel on foot, to find the carriage

* Literary Remains, ii.

prepared for the royal family, she met that of La Fayette; "she had the fancy," said M. de la Marck, "to touch, with a little cane that she held in her hand, the wheel as it passed close by her." "That little freak of innocent vengeance," adds M. Sainte-Beuve, "was the last act of the gaiety of a young woman. It was three days afterwards that her hair was white as snow."

Most people, without being regularly irregular, have been merry twice and once ere now; though each, in some frozen circles, may repeat, in allusion to his experience, the poet's line, and say,

"Quocirca mecum loquor hoc, tacitusque recordor."

"Why did you not keep your engagement with me," writes Pliny to Septitius Clarus, "and partake of my poor fare? How agreeably should we have spent the evening, in laughing, trifling, and literary amusements! You may be entertained, I confess, at many places more splendidly; but you can nowhere be treated with more unconstrained cheerfulness, simplicity, and freedom."

For such excursions as ours people must be grown jocund and airy, somewhat like La Bruyère in one of his fits of extravagant gaiety, when he used to begin to dance all of a sudden and to sing, though his voice was not first-rate. No greater madman than he at times in the pleasure parties of Chantilly. Our evenings must often partake of this character, nay, recurring as they do so seldom, those who enjoy them must seem as if they had been born each with a song in his head; they must talk everlasting ballad. "I absolutely require," says a celebrated authoress, "a true and wholesome gaiety. What is over-refined, and savouring of literary people, wearies me in the long run. It is not brilliant conversation that I want now. I must employ my limbs; I must see what will amuse my eyes; I must have around me an exchange of vitality. Elsewhere we hear people accusing, blaming, suspecting, loathing, mocking, condemning, which proceedings are at the bottom of most literary, and artistic, and political, and philosophical talk; for sympathy, trust, and admiration have unfortunately much shorter formulas than those at the service of aversion and criticism. For these occasions poesy is a condition of existence; and all that destroys

the dream of the good, the beautiful, and the true, is a torture from which we seek to escape. Noise, therefore, even for the sake of noise, is what suits me better." So it is also with our present ramblers. Enlivened with their ride, they can't help it. If graver friends expostulate, saying, "Think of the look of the thing! have some regard to appearances!" they are tractable for a minute, like Bob Sawyer; but on condition of breaking out again into some innocent sallies of mirth. "Are you mad, sir?" demanded his companion. "Not a bit of it," replied Bob; "only cheerful." "You are mad, sir," would others reply, persisting in their opposition; "this is very midsummer madness." Well, be it so. Some, however, with Charles Nodier, would see these things differently,—with fancy, with poesy. They would not even search into the philosophic sense nor the moral tendency of playful moments; they would accept Polichenelli with his double hump. Here's fun enough at all events; and you can't deny it's in high season, for every thing is at play just now;

> "There's a dance of leaves in that aspen bower,
> There's a titter of winds in that beechen tree,
> There's a smile on the fruit, and a smile on the flower,
> And a laugh from the brook that runs to the sea."

Of course this state of things would not suit a Monsieur de Fontenelle, who was never seen to laugh. "Did you ever laugh in all your life?" said Mad. Geoffrin to him one day. "No," he replied, "I think not. Ah! ah! ah!" "That was the idea he had of laughing," she adds. Some would even call it a taking an unfair advantage of their superior faculties, and injuring their humanity by indulging in an unhandsome pleasure for which their reason rebukes them. Neither would the invitations of nature be much esteemed by our Hippomedons, who in youth refuse to turn themselves to the pleasures of the Muses, but inhabit the fields, giving hard practice to their bodies, rejoicing in huntings, in horses, and the bow; for we may omit mention of their sports when they do condescend to honour the town with their presence, which consist in converse with pugilists, going on the sly to the ring, buying rats from its champions in order to see how many each of their dogs can kill, pigeon-shooting, and other elegant amusements, that

bespeak laudable steadiness, a proper degree of obduracy, and, in general, very correct conduct. But still there is something to be said for recreation in our favourite form notwithstanding; for, after all, please to observe that dancing, which is as old an exercise as the human race, without raising a question upon that subject, may be said to recommend itself, as Montesquieu remarks, "to the most refined taste, pleasing us by its sprightliness, by a certain grace, and beauty, and variety of attitude, by its connexion with music, and by a disposition of our brain, which is such that it refers in secret the idea of all these movements to certain movements, and the greatest part of these attitudes to certain attitudes." If this mute poesy, as Simonides called it, be liable to abuse, that is no reason for absolutely, and under all circumstances, crying it down. Prohibit your doubtful dance, as the ancients called a kind which Plato condemned, the *ἀμφισβητουμένην ὄρχησιν*, but disparage not that which they called *Ἐμμέλεια*, the gentle dance, which signifies only grace and good behaviour *. But be the form of these amusements what it may, and this is varied enough in all conscience, please to notice also that the sport of our metropolitan lads, for all their occasional sauciness to rustics taunting them, or, as the ancients would say, for all their "frons urbana," does not consist in giving unnecessary pain—as some squeamish philosophers will pretend—to inferior creatures, who find life pleasure, and feel pain to die. The sports of those who dress "horsy" and despise them seem to be not so immediately suitable to serene hours. These heroes are likened by some to an imaginary race of supernatural beings, that can be supposed pursuing men as a recreation, or an exercise of health, as a needful inducement for them to reside on the earth. Very ill-natured that simile, and going too far; but certainly the scorners of your suburban pleasures are not in general a very sensitive race; gentleness and tenderness are not their weak points, nor do they exaggerate in showing

> "———— mercy to the weak, and reverence
> For life, which, in its weakness, or excess,
> Is still a gleam of God's omnipotence."

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* Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscript. tom. i.

They have not even any great fancy for painting or music; they only like what is muscular, animal, and violent. Longfellow has hit a feature in their character which few would have remarked; for, after describing their austere views, backed even, perhaps, by scriptural interpretations, and saying how their favourite pastime was to kill, he says—

> "E'en now, while walking down the rural lane,
> He lopped the wayside lilies with his cane."

However, the world is wide, let them speed to the wilds that suit them, and do wonders in the lowlands or elsewhere, kill dun cows and other monsters, beget themselves a reputation, and have their way by all means, only leaving us freedom to enjoy ours.

Along with an aptitude for midsummer sport, which can be varied enough in all conscience, we desire, however, in our companion for such intervals, a taste for higher, for more tender and intellectual pleasures; so now attend, Mr. Fast, for this will concern you. We expect not, as I shall show on a later ramble, to find in the sunny corner of a garden, or in a trellised arbour, as in a book of fancy, where is read nothing but curious pleasures, as from thence sorrow were ever razed, people as described in the song,—

> "Come where my love lies dreaming,
> Sweetly dreaming the happy hours away."

Ours are mixed dreams. We shall probably have one of well-divided disposition, nor sad nor merry, like Menenius saying, "I could weep, and I could laugh; I am light and heavy." De Quincey speaks of a man who used to be overpowered with melancholy on hearing the lines—

> "In sight of the spires
> All alive with the fires
> Of the sun going down to his rest,
> In the broad open eye of the solitary sky
> They dance—there are three, as jocund as free,
> While they dance on the calm river's breast."

And he adds, "Undeniably there is even here, where the spirit

of gaiety is professedly invoked, an oblique though evanescent image flashed upon us of a sadness that lies deep behind the laughing figures, and of a solitude that is the real possessor in fee of all things, but is waiting an hour or so for the dispossession of the dancing men and maidens, who for that transitory hour are the true, but, alas! the fugitive tenants." Oh, what a thought is that for one who has lost a friend! Yes, there is a sort of Job of joy as well as a Job of misfortune; looking back on some short period of his life, or on some incident, with feelings inexpressibly profound, "as a jewelly parenthesis of pathetic happiness, such as emerges but once in any man's life;" and who in consequence becomes one full of thoughts amidst the music and the dance, having a certain fastidious dislike to all the resorts of the great, where the more pleasurable faculties are dormant, and all the harsher ones aroused; seeming to be haunted by passions turned to ghosts, that unfit him for the scenes of the world, though still feeling within himself how healthful a thing is true contentment and even mirth. Seeking the calm delights of the beautiful, and to sun himself in the light of his own thoughts, such a one, for being alive to the charm of a symmetrical nature, rounded, integral, and complete, and responsive to the influence that leaves a tender warmth playing round the heart, and vivifying feelings which seemed unknown before, for seeming in this way to enjoy mirthful pleasures some twice or thrice a year, combined with the peace of retirement amidst a paradise of happy golden creations of his own, is condemned by false counsellors, arrogating to themselves the right of speaking and pronouncing for us all. It is difficult to unfold the whole of this thought respecting these aptitudes and aspirations, however by inference we may esteem them, if not needful, at least excusable. A celebrated author says that he doubts "the depth of feeling in any man who has not certain recesses in his soul into which none may enter;" and for the reason that none could or would care to do so. Perhaps our pleasures, like our miseries, are for the most part imaginary, or, as Dr. Johnson says, secret. Most persons are borne up by some interior satisfaction, some private consciousness, some silent half-hope, some indescribable memory or prospect, which they never seek, or, indeed, have the power to

communicate; but which they naturally reserve for solitary hours and a sort of private meditation, that is not always without its profit; for, as Leonato says, "How much better is it to weep at joy than to joy at weeping!" Without these aspirations, memories, or fragments of hopes, there is danger of a man turning out to be too prosaic and selfish a character to suit company like the present; and that not so much from wanting these, as from the qualities of a positive and repulsive order, which are almost sure to occupy their room. Moreover, in a general way, the sort of person we want is one whose pleasure, and even amusement, consists in appreciating the charm of the poetic side of things; who can enjoy, like Fenelon, "the delicious nights of summer, when zephyrs refresh men, and dews the thirsty earth;" who loves, as Coleridge says,

> "The sound like of a hidden brook
> In the leafy month of June,
> That to the sleeping woods all night
> Singeth a quiet tune;"

who can break forth, saying with Lorenzo,

> "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon the bank!"

or with Hartwell,

> "What a sweet thing is night! how calm and harmless!
> No whispering but of leaves, on which the breath
> Of heaven plays music to the birds that slumber.
> What a fine book is heaven! which we may read
> Best now, when every star is a fair letter.
> How much they wrong thee, Night, who call thee guilty!"

I repeat it, he who can best sympathize with these thoughts is most likely to prove the sort of person proper for a companion on such occasions; one who, to any one asking, "What time do you mean to get back to London?" will reply, with Shakspeare's honest fellow, "Time enough to go to bed with a candle, I warrant thee;"—one who will like to hear the nightingale singing by night, not one who will never move out but in the day, "when every goose is cackling," nor cease from teasing us with

prudential maxims of health, and other things such as are intended, though not enough, to be "the decay of late walking through the realm."

We set out by avowing that for this day's excursion amusement and out-door pleasures were to be not only our object, but the subject of our thoughts. You can make a note of it if you like. Let us proceed then to consider what can be said in favour of such things when understood in the sense in which they are enjoyed here, distinguished from the abuses from which so many unhappily seem to regard them as inseparable, though of course, even so distinguished, there is no use to suggest to some persons what is pleasing if it be opposite to their thoughts. But, heeding them not, I speak on, and, as Philippe de Commines frankly says, "fay je mon compte que bestes ne s'amuseront point à lire ces pages," but people of common sense and valour.

Where abuses lead I suppose "every wise man's son doth know." I am not going to involve myself in the subtleties of that dark labyrinth. There is to be found, no doubt, in most places the man in one respect alone, and in a sense more fatal than ever Homer contemplated, like Ulysses,—

"Cui potior patria fuit interdicta voluptas."

There is perhaps also a more dangerous class always existing in these refined and deliberate sophists described by Balzac. "To hear them," he says, "the Sybarites were only gross voluptuaries, and Naples and Capua understood nothing. They do not carry the day," he adds, "at once, but they insinuate their views. Burrhus is heard, but they prevent his being believed. By degrees they lure on their victims, proving good to be a matter of indifference, and evil only a thing quite reasonable." All that may seem very well for a time; but then without waiting very long to see the assertion verified, there's felt to be a weariness in all things, as Callista while a pagan said, even though at that time there is some sense in Lady Plyant's hypothesis, when she says, "Maybe you doesn't think it a sin." But to require us to have all this world of misery brought before our eyes when we merely talk of amusement and pleasures, and of going out for the day like common folks, who cannot taste

them when involved in it, is to merit the taunt of arch Maria, "Do you think I have not wit enough to lie straight in my bed?" I hope we do not seek to apparel vice like virtue's harbinger; for, as Luciana says with Shakspeare,

"Ill deeds are doubled with an evil word."

But these recreations, for all the heavy train of learning that you try to bring up against them, are not Bacchus; these are not dances of thyrsus-bearing Bacchants, not the clang of cymbals, nor the drippings of wine. No, be assured, we are not quite a nation of pagan sots and swaggerers, of seducers and gamesters, or of monsters such as rich noble hoary-headed devils in the shape of men about town in the London season become. There are plenty of good generous fellows, who, as the clown says, "hold Beelzebub at the stave's end as well as men in their case may do, and that often means very effectually." "I could see that," replied a sharp, though an innocent youth from the country, when some one told him that it was necessary for us to be on our guard against mischief within certain suburban precincts. But these censors talk of the amusements of very manly, Christian, simple, and well-behaved people as if forsooth those who partake of them were met together like heathens of the third century, as described in Callista, to celebrate the feast-days of Astarte, wearing on their foreheads and arms the symbols of idolatry, as if the taint of an idolatrous city were in the works of God, the trees and flowers, and that the very fragrant air was doing the fiend's work. "But," as the author of that admirable book says, "well is it for us that we in this age do not experience, nay, a blessed thing that we cannot even frame to ourselves in imagination the actual details of evil which hung as an atmosphere over the cities of pagan Rome." When Montesquieu tells us that he came out once from seeing a play with better and greater resolutions than he ever felt before, he explains the difference between his experience and that of the ancient philosopher, who says he always came out from such places a worse man than when he entered them, by saying simply and truly, "It is that they are not the same kind of thing." No, people may add also with all security of conscience, neither are these unpretending places

of resort for summer amusement, however pretty and inviting, like the famous gardens of Sallust constructed with the gold and tears of Africa, gardens in consequence which have left an indelible stain upon his memory. The poet praises that wife of Mæcenas,—

> "Quam nec ferre pedem dedecuit choris,
> Nec certare joco, nec dare brachia
> Ludentem nitidis virginibus."

If this be paganism, one might think that there can be no great shock to a simple conscience, untampered with by sophists, in pleading guilty to the charge of having incurred it. Yes, at least we can suppose such a thing as music with dancing on the greensward near the river, and walks amidst parterres, and good humour, and a general atmosphere of sympathy, not a bad sort of thing, though it is set down for poetical, "old folk and young folk together, and children mingled among them," and no public mischief in our mirth to plague our country, and, amidst all, as the poet Brizeux says in his rather Frenchified way, which at no time is quite our way, a place where—

> "L'époux est sans soupçon, la femme sans mystère;
> L'un n'a rien à savoir, l'autre n'a rien à taire."

Our English poet, however, in an earlier age, went much farther, saying, by the mouth of Mrs. Ford,

> "We'll leave a proof, by that which we will do,
> Wives may be merry, and yet honest too;
> We do not act, that often jest and laugh;
> 'Tis old but true, Still swine eat all the draff."

Nevertheless, even in citing these last lines, one may feel, and most people will feel, that all such allusions are disagreeable and somewhat offensive. For the truth is, that for many good fellows and choice companions it is an essential element of serenity to ignore much that does unhappily take place in the world, and to believe fulfilled in most places the prayer of the Church on Holy Saturday, "Ut populo ad æternitatem vocato, una sit fides mentium et pietas actionum." As for knowing, like so many serious people, all about manners contrary to that unity, and in that way resembling Madame la Maréchale

d'Humières, who, as Saint-Simon says, "meddled with every thing with which she had nothing to do," one would like to be able to say with a poet, speaking of the brackish stream of the Dobroutcha,—

"Nec aquis adsuevimus istis."

But, in fact, to stand on one's guard against some moralists, one is driven to offend against delicacy, if not even against the virtue which their mode of defence compromises. There is not purity enough in language to refute some accusations; and besides, do you think there would be more transgressors if all were not divulged? Nay, as an old Roman said, on a subject somewhat analogous, there would be fewer; for, as he adds, "it is not expedient that every one should be told of all that is wrong—pudorem enim rei tollet multitudo peccantium, et desinet esse probri loco commune maledictum*." Of course, pleasure and mirth, and fun, and music, and dancing, may be abused just as poetry can be abused. Poetry, say some, must be banished because it is made an ill use of. "Are we," asks Balzac, "to be angry with it because it is abused? Are fêtes to be condemned because idleness and pleasure do not make a good use of them? Are all plays and spectacles to be abolished because sometimes debauchery mixes with joy? In my opinion this rigour is a little too great; there ought to be books to instruct, and there ought to be books to amuse. The mind has need of both. Let the canon law and the Justinian code be in honour. Let them reign in the universities; but do not banish Homer and Virgil. At least keep them in libraries, from which Caligula wished to chase them as well as Livy. Cultivate olives and vines, but do not pull up the myrtles and roses. It would be a strange reformation of the state, if you were to prohibit all honest pleasures and destroy all beautiful things. In that respect bad humour is bad policy, and the melancholy of your serious people ought not to be a rule for the police. If nothing is to be kept in kingdoms but what they call the strong and the solid, nothing will be safe but arsenals and citadels, ramparts and bastions." Saint-Simon, it is true, visiting Strasbourg for the first time,

* Sen. de Beneficiis, lib. iii. 16.

expresses his admiration only at "the greatness and beauty of its fortifications *." But all people cannot be expected to have a taste for such severe things. Balzac at least is not inclined to give them a preference; for "what would it be," he asks, "to let fall to ruin all the pleasure-gardens near Rome—all that is so fair at Frescati and Tivoli? or to see in waste desolation the gardens of Fontainbleau? Such negligence would be a crime. These people, if they had the direction of the world, would abolish spring and youth." It is but fair to add, however, that when it was proposed during the regency of the Duke of Orleans to destroy Marly for the sake of economy, and in order to make some miserable profit of the pipes of its fountains, it was the same stickler for the strong and useful who prevented the execution of the sentence †.

But it is time to think of finishing this day's excursion, which, somehow or other, by an untoward fatality, has been spent more in defending than enjoying ourselves. We great people in England seem always afraid of enjoying ourselves. It is almost always foreigners of the same rank that you find in the little wayside gardens in and about London, having their quiet chat in the arbour with a cup of coffee, thinking it for the time "all right;" while our English "low" people enjoy close to them their glass of ale, and think it all right too.

Before starting off, a few words more, however, must be added. "In the whole empire of pleasure," says Balzac, paying for once the necessary tribute which every one has to settle with the spirit of his particular times, "there is no enjoyment so sweet as that of a city taken or a battle gained." This was speaking in accordance with the good old legitimate and respectable idea, that it is far better for people to be slaughtering each other than singing and dancing and swimming; as when the Egyptian Athenæus says that in the Odyssey men were "living easily and luxuriously owing to the peace, which explains why in such inglorious times Homer describes them as dancing and playing ball ‡." The Greeks, however, would not have agreed with Balzac, as the chorus of Sophocles can indicate, exclaiming, "Would that that man had first entered

* Tom. i. † xiv. 200. ‡ i.

the boundless ether or Hades who showed the Greeks the common use, in war, of hateful arms! Ah, toils! of toils the parent. For he was man's ruin. He hath appointed to accompany me neither the joy of chaplets, nor the dulcet harmony of instruments,—the wretch! nor allowed me to linger o'er delights. Even from love itself, alas! he hath debarred me." The Athenians, therefore, would have cried shame on Balzac for this one saying of his, and consistently enough too, for they expended more on getting up for representation the Medea and Antigone, the Bacchi and the Phœnicians, than on the Persian war and defending the sovereignty of Greece.

"Do you think," asks Balzac, returned to himself, and speaking wisely, "that it was only the Sybarites who liked fêtes and mirth? The gravest Romans could play. Did not even Scipio come down from his high horse when he went to gather shells on the sea-shore with a party of friends, and when he even put words into the mouth of Chremes and Micio in the plays of Terence?" Aristotle in the fourth ethic did not fear to say that play and diversion were no less necessary to life than rest and nourishment, in which opinion St. Thomas, the angel of the school, agreed. The Peripatetics, wiser than the Stoics, seeing that the nature of man was composed of both soul and body, asserted that the virtues of both should be cultivated *. Christian antiquity, at all events, seems to have settled the question in practice. It appears to have had no other philosophy of common life than that which, with St. Thomas, admitted of recreation. "Interrupt your labour," it said with the Père Boutauld, "when reason and necessity will that you should. Play and amuse your mind with some honest pleasure; and in order to do this best, follow your inclinations, and accommodate yourself to your humour. Choose among recreations that kind which you know will please you most, which will be the most likely to divert and refresh you. Play and amuse yourself, in order to preserve your health, your innocence, and your life, to please God, and to obey the laws of his providence †." Did not the wise man of old even say, "Visum est mihi bonum, ut comedat quis, et bibat, et fruatur lætitia et

* De Fin. iv.

† Les Conseils de la Sagesse, 119.

labore suo?" And does not a holy priest, who cites the words when treating on the right use of every thing, add in another place, "Certainly, among Christians, the number is almost infinite of those who possess the changeable goods of fortune in the manner that reason advocates, and so possess them that they are not possessed by them, so use as not to abuse them*?" Nay, we should not be perverting things if we were to add, that the same Christian civilization had for maxim also

"Away with melancholy!"

for it added, with an old French author, "I neither love nor esteem melancholy; and as for making a dress of it for conscience and virtue on all occasions, oh! it would be a vile and ignoble costume." This was the spirit of that prud'homie which Joinville, and Saint Louis, and all that race of ancient Christians loved; evincing youthfulness of heart, joyous simplicity, reverential docility, courage, and good sense, employed in the use of all things. That old society, so imbued with faith, without boasting of it, seems to have known the necessity that exists for the amusement of serene hours. "Let wives and women, and all the world," says Cervantes, "have diversion; for the counsels of the devil are those of ennui." "Belgium," says Philippe de Commines, "is the country of all others in Christendom the most given to all the pleasures and delights to which man is inclined; and they are good Christians, and God is there well served and honoured†." Even the genius of joy itself seems to have belonged to an extensive family of minds that the Christian civilization would have been sorry to part with. "The joy of the mind indicates its strength," a celebrated beauty used to say, in that sentence, at least, not opposed to its philosophy. The great secret of conversation Mademoiselle de Scudery thought—and neither was her opinion on this head at variance with it—was to banish whatever could irritate or offend any one, and to retain as its predominant feature "a certain tone of joy." When Madame Geoffrin, having returned to a sincere sense of religion, was dying, with profound expres-

* Pet. Bagonel, de Bono Divitiar. Usu, 229.

† Liv. v. c. 18.

sions of faith and piety, some persons in the room were conversing on the means which governments they thought ought to employ in order to benefit the people, and each was devising some great project; "you may add," she said, interrupting them, "the care to provide pleasures for them, a thing not sufficiently attended to." It was not in the depths of their fall that these persons learned to speak thus; they did so when remembering the thoughts of their innocence, and the spirit of those who had directed it. "I wish," says the catholic and religious Balzac, "that I could be cured of this serious humour of mine, and this melancholy philosophy of my own brewing. Perhaps I shall become gay by contagion. I'll take to Scarron." In our times, on the Continent, we find religious persons and devout Catholics expressing the same sentiments. Madame Swetchine, for instance, whose claim to a place in that category no one, I suppose, will contest, has left this sentence in a letter to the Countess de Nesselrode, "The privation which appears to youth only under the form of rigorous reason or of an absolute necessity, seems to it tyrannical, and can lead it quite straight to a kind of hardening of conscience, when there would be no longer any thing to expect from it. Gratitude, on the contrary, for pleasure wisely granted to it produces effects of amelioration on all points*."

And after all, turning from persons in a wretched and often causeless state of depression, who must not admire cheerfulness, a manly relish of life, a love of human kind—all included in the spirit we are advocating? Its antagonist, the gloom, the sullenness, the dusky melancholy, is one of the great characteristics of savage life, of vicious life. Gaiety and joy belong to civilization and goodness. Addison, whose mind was formed by many of the old views, is praised for having written his papers for the Spectator as gaily as if each time he was going out for a holiday. "I have heard a very learned gentleman say," observes Balzac, "but he could say it a great deal better than I can, that there is such a thing as an art of using pleasure innocently; that it is not fair to accuse the purity of things of the intemperance of men; and that it is not credible that the

* Lettres, i. 281.

gaieties of this life were made for the wicked. I am of the opinion of this rare intelligence, and cannot be persuaded that God should have sent virtue into the world to punish poor creatures; and that there is no virtue if it does not walk on thorns, lodge in the hospital, and dwell in the sepulchre. But the serenity of this man's mind was not to be troubled by the outpourings of sophists. He would only laugh at the paradoxes of Seneca. He would say, however, that you must be prepared to suffer all things from the race of Zeno and the nation of the Stoics; that every thing must be permitted to a philosopher who was so great an enemy of life, that he used to advise men always to hang themselves when they were in bad humour." Gloomy or nervous people see the speedy end of all amusement, and thereupon conclude its vanity,—the short term which is exempt from contrast of dark shade,—and from that fact infer the danger of brightness; bidding us therefore, like Cassandra, to pay betimes a moiety of that mass of moans to come. Of course, all this pleasure is fugitive, subject to sudden interruption, to irremediable destruction. No one has been made to feel that truth more deeply than some who are now at your side. But it seems better to acquiesce humbly in the present order of things, by which "love for one another is especially sweetened," letting the dance go on innocently while it can, and leaving life, with all its variety of tragic and but half-explained depths, abrupt amidst flower-beds, yawning in our pleasure-grounds, unfathomed, and with only a faint glimmer to show what is within them; rather than by an overweening attempt of reason to throw full light upon them by means of its own dark lantern, to pretend to show us in these abysses that every bright and graceful thing we loved was nothing else all the while but a monster waiting to devour us, as if all joy involved disorder, all felicity transgression, and all graces danger. Better leave men to weep when the time comes for it, and not till then. Ah! that time is safe to come to every one as it has already come to many; better, I say, such counsel than tell them beforehand to taste nothing but sorrow, and feel perhaps a self-complacent exultation at the exemptions from pleasure hitherto by an act of their own volition extended to themselves. Shall I tell you what sounds to many ten heavens above all this philosophy of

persons who think they know the exact reason for every thing? It is three words of a Gospel narrative, when, after relating the death of a young man, it is merely said, "et lachrymatus est Jesus"—Jesus wept.

There is no use, however, in our stopping here any longer, for these objectors will not have their answer from us fully until we have made many more voyages, and seen things from more points of view. Meanwhile, as Teucer says, "to whomsoever in opinion this is not pleasing, let him fondly cling to other, and me to this." For the present it suffices to crave their attention to a concession that all our friends will make them right cordially in closing this day's excursion. "Pleasures of sense, pleasures of mind, pleasures of the heart, such are the goods," says M. Laromiguière, "which nature has spread with profusion on the road of life. Pleasures of sense, rapid and fugitive, leave after them the vacancy of nothing. Pleasures of mind, which enter largely into serene hours, as shall be seen later, are ever new, attractive, and delightful; and yet there is an enjoyment greater still. Yes; whatever may have been the rapture of a Newton after decomposing light, and discovering the law of gravitation, the philosopher might with justice say, when he looked back on his researches, in relation to the sovereign good, 'Vanity!' But pleasures of the heart! the memory of a good action, with faith and the love of God,—as we shall find later,—that is what suffices to embellish the last days of old age, and what will accompany men like a smile from beauty to the tomb."

At the close of this day's ramble I am willing to make another concession to our Catos, which I fear will please them rather more than the last. Some of our friends, I know, would blame us for uttering what we are about to confess, saying each time, "what hearts or limbs soever we have, and though never so feeble, let us set our best faces on it, and laugh our last gasp out before we discover any dislike or weariness;" but nevertheless, confronted with such gravities as are now before us, we are ready to admit, that often when we have made the greatest, and most formal, and most intelligent provision for amusement and out-of-door pleasures, the result does not exactly fulfil our expectations. "Le plaisir," says Mme. de Maintenon, "fuit à pro-

portion qu'on le cherche." And then, besides, the fact is that really one is exposed to so many casualties, that without irreverence one may say with Philippe de Commines on no doubt a graver occasion, how we ever got there or got back must be ascribed to Providence; for since we must generally have what he calls "une gaillarde compagnie," there will sometimes be reason to conclude, as he adds, "that only heaven could have saved it from disasters; ainsi faut conclure," he says, "que ce voyage fut conduit de Dieu tant à l'aller, qu'au retourner; car le sens des conducteurs ne servit de guères." Even when things are otherwise, and ever so wisely managed, we are prepared to avow, that such a day often ends, as a poet says of Romeo and Juliet, "with a long, deep sigh, like the last breeze of the Italian evening." Young people it is true, as some one remarks, are not much given to scepticism with regard to their pleasures, and they think one cannot be better employed than in dreaming about them or enjoying them when they "come off." But for all your heartiness and vehemence, for all the beauty of the rose, and whatever is sweet in the freshness of the spring, it is better to be more modest on setting out, and not promise too much; for there are many chances against the passing off of every thing just as we expected, so as to entitle our fête to the appellation of εὐωχία, the name derived from every thing going on well—ἀπὸ τοῦ εὖ ἔχειν. Without even supposing the presence of any vulgar-minded, irritable, or dull companion, there are some chances that, with the sweetest dispositions, exclusive of others, the result may turn out to be as great a sedative for a week or two as if, instead of being out all day on the river, we had been reading some book like that of René d'Anjou, which he entitled "Mortifiement, ou Mortification de Vaine Plaisance," and dedicated to no less grave a personage than John Bernard, archbishop of Tours. In order to content all these respectable monitors, I shall suppose it to be an instance in proof now. Our hearts are not so light as they were in the morning; and that you may learn we can be out of humour for company, we are come back, dog and all, nothing indeed so peremptory as we were on our start. Well, to see what bad events may peep out of the tail of good purposes! "Multa cadunt inter"—you can guess the rest; many things fall between the cup and lip;

and though they touch, you are not sure to drink. So let us fancy that we hear some one asking, "Why do you look so jaded and unhappy returning home? Just heavens! suppose this famous last trip of yours, so long projected, expressly for a day's pleasure, should have turned out a failure, such another case as that so humorously related in Household Words? 'I say, Charley,' said Purkes, who had been obstinately silent about it on his return, coming into his room after the other, who had not been of the party, had gone to bed, 'with regard to our cruise, why, don't say any thing about it, you know, but the fact is it was a failure.' 'Good gracious me!' exclaimed the other with feigned regret, 'I was afraid of that.' 'Yes,' rejoined the somewhat dejected excursionist, 'I thought I'd mention it. Good night!' 'Well,' repeated the other, still counterfeiting, 'I'm so sorry.'" O day untowardly turned! O mischief strangely thwarting! Let our stay-at-homes be grateful to us now for enabling them to share in that sly rogue's contentment. What would they have more? They have seen us for once coming back under the impression of what fine writers call "an immense nostalgy,"—'tis some comfort for them that they had us to laugh at. Besides, "they have got us to go to work," as some one said of the great bell of Westminster, which seemed at first not much inclined to it; all right, at least in their estimation, for the rest of the week. But hark! We're not discouraged for all that. As Overdo says in an old comedy, the piper is not to put up his pipes for one rainy Sunday holiday. So where's the next rendezvous?

"Neither in village nor in town,
But three miles off at Malpe-down."

CHAPTER VII.

N a journey made when very young, and not very knowing as to the comparative eligibility of climates in different seasons, across the south of France, in the burning months of July and August, a certain beardless excursionist from Petersham fell in with a party of Gauls, who, in obedience to the force of circumstances, claimed him as one of their company for four or five successive days, while slowly achieving the distance between Paris and Bourdeaux. It was during the time of the Restoration—a singular epoch; France had then liberty and laws, which had lasted already five or six years; "remarkable fact," as Jules Janin says, "for a country like France." Nevertheless, in those times the English were not very popular down that line of country. Though on this occasion nothing personal was intended beyond calling him, with a sort of prophetic instinct, in reference to what he was destined to achieve, Monsieur la Tamise, and leading him, good-humouredly enough, I must own, blindfold one morning from the inn to the terrace at Angouleme, to enhance his surprise at the beauty of La belle France, by having the bandage from his eyes suddenly removed at that spot, the pleasure to them too clearly arising, not from the beauty of the prospect, but, however one might wish to believe the contrary, from the kind of national triumph that they expected over their victim, whom they seemed half inclined to pardon—though with these exceptions they talked on general topics, still the conversation could hardly be qualified as agreeable to one not initiated into the mysteries of the opposition that was then in vogue. It was not characterized exactly by pure innocence, or, as Homer would say, reverence for heaven; they were not God-revering men, and there could be no mistake on that point. They were liberals, in the sense of the term then understood by it, admirers of the classic in their way, and Bona-

partists. To use the pencil of a great artist*, one might say that "it seemed as if they had a spite against the human race, as if there was within them a deep furnace of hate, ever ready to accuse whatever was before them, and to ascribe to the first comer the totality of their own deceptions:" when all this leaven used to rise up and boil over in their mouths and eyes, they were not very pleasant to look at or to listen to. Moreover, they seemed to personify the adoration of matter by mind. As for religion in her white robe, you can guess how that party fared with them. It was not at that epoch the mockery of Julian that was heard. One time each knew not his own meaning, but "would gabble like a thing most brutish;" at another, what they shouted in chorus was

> "Abominable, unutterable, and worse
> Than fables yet have feigned."

There was, in fact, an incessant onslaught on whatever deserved love or respect. Serenity in their company was out of the question. All of a feather as they seemed to be, a thoughtful observer might have foreseen a day when each in old age would have said of the other, like the Regicide alluding to Robespierre when the last was named before him, "Eloignez de moi cet infame!" Like sinister and ill-savoured birds, every thing that they lighted on was torn in pieces, bespattered, and changed to corruption, needless to add, desecrated. So great is the ugliness, as a French author remarks, of man when he is left alone with his body after renouncing his soul, that one might say with truth they presented a kind of startling phenomena. They were "terrible-looking beings, with unaccountable aspects, seeming to wish to dispense death and horror with their eyes; pallid Gorgons, barking Scyllas, Chimeras that vomited ashes, and monsters such as he never before heard or thought of, with perverse aspects, all mixed up in one." Yet I can tell you, for all that, as they repeatedly affirmed of themselves, they too had their philosophy and their philosophers. Like the "Senator" described by Victor Hugo, they used to cry, "Vive Zéro qui me laisse tranquille!" Their conversation, in a word, would have

* V. Hugo.

admirably supplied matter for the chapter of his great work which is entitled "Philosophie après Boire*." It was with such a flight of polluting, shameless harpies that this new-fledged bird had slowly and heavily to wing his way through those lovely regions; and the memory of this journey suggests a subject very proper for our present ramble, though for the ground which, as Armado writes, or for the place where, we have for this once nothing very definite to chronicle; but during the interval employed, it has been decided in council, that we should consider how necessary must be always the absence of vice when any one is desirous of going out for the day, to spend a few serene hours.

When people desire particularly to enjoy themselves in the open air, it is their general custom to select some favourite spot that "hath choice of sun or shade," which, according to the season, can enhance their serenity by yielding them atmospheric pleasures, and suggest the words, "mihi præter omnes angulus ridet." "Charming expression!" as Jules Janin says, "which can only be comprehended when one has seen and touched these smiling little corners which are so many Edens on a fine day." In Provence it is usual to call each of them "la cheminée du Roi René;" and this quaint title, inherited by every genial spot sheltered from the north wind near Aix or Marseille, where people warm themselves in the sun, is given for the reason that it was the custom of that amiable prince, a true lover of serene hours, to choose, when at those cities as when at his villa of Gardane, some pleasant walk where he could enjoy a gentle warmth at a season when in the higher regions of Provence the cold had stiffened every thing in nature†. Indeed, we must acknowledge once for all, that in every climate under heaven, we are debtors always to the weather for our sort of serene hours. There's no denying it; the chief charm of morning and evening, the beauty of every landscape, the effect produced by seeing streets or villas, by hearing music, and even conversation, depends in some degree upon the state of the air, upon the weather, upon the sun in short, so true it is that even our

* Les Misérables, tom. i. 8.

† Papon, Hist. Gén. de Provence, tom. iii. 391.

pleasure comes to us from another orb far away from this earth we tread on. One is tempted to exclaim, "How delightful when it will be all weather, all air, all the blue or golden heaven!" or, with Longfellow,

> "O life and love! O happy throng
> Of thoughts, whose only speech is song!
> O heart of man! canst thou not be
> Blithe as the air is, and as free?"

But to return to the atmospheric casualties on this queer globe of ours. To provide against them was a point that the ancients at least paid great attention to, as may be witnessed in Philoctetes, even amidst his sufferings on the island of Lemnos; for when Ulysses is in search of him he desires Neoptolemus to spy out for him "whereabouts lay the cavern of double mouth, of such a nature, that there in cold weather was at hand a two-fold place to sit in the sun; and in the summer other seats exposed to the breeze, wafting slumber through the hollow vault." Nicander of Thyatira tells us, indeed, that there were woods and shady places expressly provided, called ψυκτῆρες as for cooling oneself in; though these latter, in England, generally are, it must be admitted, less necessary than your sunny exposures. Pliny gives a charming description of what he terms his 'villula' of Laurentinum, distant seventeen miles from Rome, where, after finishing his affairs in town, he can pass his evenings. He describes the two roads leading to it, the scenery around it, and the different rooms and porticoes. "At one end," he says, "is a turret, in which is a room that receives the rising and the setting sun. In the gardens are alleys so soft, that you may walk barefoot without injury. Before a portico lies a terrace perfumed with violets, and warmed by the reflection of the sun from the portico, which, as it retains the rays, so it keeps off the north-east wind; and it is as warm on this side as it is cool on the opposite; in the same manner it proves a defence against the south-west, and this, by means of its several sides, breaks the force of the winds, from what points soever they blow." This was all very well, no doubt, and we ourselves, too, without being proprietors of any freehold villa, or having as much as a window-stool that can be truly and legally denominated our

own at the present time, can choose our public site lying north or south, as the exigency of the season may demand; but for the purpose that we have in view, young gentlemen and women, let us be assured that there is an exposition more important than any which has regard to sun or wind. We need an atmosphere from which have been eliminated certain moral influences, the presence of which would render the attainment of a serene hour impossible; elements which can never, by any art, be made capable of entering into affinity with the joyousness and contentment of a happy heart. And this is the subject—trite or commonplace as it may seem at first—which we now propose, as very earnest persons, to consider, while resting upon this flowery bank, leaving our skiff tied to the willow that leans over the stream.

"Youth to itself rebels, though none else near."

At least so we are told by the old dramatic poet; and it is to be feared, at least as things are just now, he speaks what is by no means incredible.

"For we mankind in our minority
Are like women in their uncertainty.
That they are most forbidden, they
Will soonest attempt."

But be that as it may, no one has to wait very long to be convinced of the existence of certain moral influences which, if not the instinct of the moment, at least subsequent experience proves to be incompatible with the object that is supposed to suggest the kind of journeys and voyages on which we are engaged. Even under a gross physical form the antagonistic element is met with in the very scenes where serenity is expressly sought for. Formerly it used to be in many places, by a sudden irruption of Moors or savages, that the poor little party of pleasure would be put to flight. In the Force of Blood by Cervantes, for instance,—not to open the great folio histories of the orders of Mercy and of the Trinity, which are full of examples in point, we have the old hidalgo with his daughter, and Leocadie and the rest of his family, taking recreation on one of the hottest nights of summer on the banks of the Tagus,

at Toledo, where people generally go for that purpose, and staying there—only think of it!—so late as eleven o'clock, when the cruel event on which the story turns takes place, as they return so merrily—just as we can fancy ourselves doing—up the steep hill to the city. It was similarly to enjoy serene hours that the beautiful Leonisa, and Cornelio her lover, with their parents and friends, went one evening to divert themselves in the garden of Ascanio, near the sea-shore, on the road of the salt-pans at Trapani, in Sicily, when all of a sudden a cloud of Turks issued from two corsair vessels that had escaped notice, and entered a creek near the spot, rushed into the garden, and seizing Leonisa, carried her off with two others, the rest escaping by flight, as Cervantes relates in his tale of the Generous Lover. The page of old romance, too, leaves no reader unacquainted with such discordant scenes; as, for instance, when Orlando and Agrican fight at "the beautiful green place in a wood, with a fountain in it," just the very spot cut out for us. So again, when you are introduced to Armida in the Bower of Bliss, another scene to which the name itself invites us, it is by warriors who come to take her lover away to battle *. How many instances, too, in the Palmerin de Oliva and other such books, where giants and savage men and cruel enchanters used to interrupt the serene enjoyment of some little party or other! However, not to adduce the days of old romance, when the roads and forests, and no doubt the rivers too, being frequented by knights errant and fair damsels, adventures and disasters were so multiplied that, as we read in the Palmerin of England, "no one who wished it ever so much could travel quietly,"—not to recall those many scenes of pleasure in the open air suddenly turned to trouble and horrors, as where in that celebrated romance, near the Castle of the Three Sisters in Ireland, a little pavilion one day being erected for the said ladies in company with six knights to make merry, the dreadful giant, Calfurnio, came upon them, and carried them all off to his castle, where they remained in prison till delivered by the knight of the savage man from England,—omitting, I say, mention of these things, of which some over-critical reader might question the authen-

* L. Hunt, Stories from the Italian Poets.

ticity,—for indeed no one now-a-days unfortunately cares to hear about giants of the gloomy sight and of the dark cave, or about savage men and cruel enchanters, whether male or female, it will be best to cite only the most grave chronicles. On recurring then to history in earlier times, we read of the Germans going armed to pleasure parties—"sæpe ad convivia procedunt armati." That did not look very pleasant, I opine. There could not have been many serene hours enjoyed, at least of old, in Ireland during the reign of those amusements, which simply consisted in killing, burning, and pillaging, that occupy, nevertheless, nearly every page of the Chronicles of the Four Masters. It need hardly be remarked, indeed, that such customs and liabilities could never be in perfect harmony with an object like ours, which, as befits lads of peace, requires people to be like the English, as full of valour as of kindness; princely in both, but not much addicted to military airs, to frightful blades, and your dead-doing looks,—in short, manly and not warlike, though by the way it is worth remarking, that even with the French it was not a warlike king, or an emperor, or a military despot that first introduced the law of the conscription, which has nothing manly about it, but that it was the democracy, the republic, the "Directoire," that is to say, five magistrates, or, as their countrymen at the time called them, in derision, five lawyers inspired by the passions of the mob at a particular moment. Well, in England, at all events, we want no one with his long sword to sweep us all off the river; calling on us from his lungs military to draw lots as to who must follow him in search of fortune or an epitaph. Each of us will say cordially,

> "Je hais tous les héros, depuis le grand Cyrus,
> Jusqu'à ce roi brillant qui forma Lentulus.
> On a beau me vanter leur conduit admirable,
> Je m'enfuis loin d'eux tous, et je les donne au diable."

But though these former discords belong only to history, and the Thames, with its banks and islands, may be regarded as secure from an irruption of turbaned ruffians to carry us off captives, there still continue to be interruptions and disquietudes of an analogous class, to defeat the best-concerted schemes for enjoying a serene hour, let the locality be what it may. There is

still the tribe of ale-washed wits, of bloated wassailers, that can make any place horrible, verifying to the letter the words of Tacitus,—"diem noctemque continuare potando nulli probrum." There are sons of the Greeks to be met with near and in London, unfortunately, as in Homer's days, staggering home after sunset, with no regard to appearances, *οὐ κατὰ κόσμον*, heavy with wine, if you do not prefer qualifying them in the less classic phrase of Shakspeare, as sons of darkness "given to taverns, and wine, and metheglins, and to drinkings, and swearings, and starings, pribbles and prabbles." Dionysius the brazen, in his Elegies, called them "rowers of cups," "rowing sailors through feasts." That's not the style we care to have with us. There are even nobles as distinguished as Antiochus, who was surnamed Epiphanes, and whom Polybius called rather Epimanes, or mad, who would drink with any one; and who, if he heard that any of the younger men, though of the meanest class, were making a little feast any where, would come with an earthen bowl and music, so that the greater part of the feasters fled away, alarmed at his shameful proceedings more than at his unexpected appearance*. "Tut, man!" will certain of their hangers-on exclaim if any one express fear of consequences, "there are other Trojans that thou dreamest not of, the which, for sport sake, are content to do the profession some grace, that would, if matters should be looked into, for their own credit sake make all whole." Swift, writing however in a far worse age than our own, says that in our northern climate all the little decorum and politeness we have are purely forced by art, and are ready to lapse into barbarity. Accordingly, in the very garden, where

"——— huc et illuc
Cursitant mistæ pueris puellæ,"

there are to be met, for the evil he stigmatized is not quite eradicated yet, men like the Suevi wearing their hair in a horrid form to strike terror, "neque enim ut ament amenturve;" wretches disdaining to acquire by sweat what can be gained by blood, so in peace coming to such spots as these, "dediti somno ciboque, sic ament inertiam et oderint quietem." Then we hear

* Athen. x.

shouted in drunken orgies, "Go it, my boys! give it to them, men and women all the same!"

"A soldier's a man,
A life's but a span."

Such a race is fearful even to look at, "nam ne in pace quidem," as Tacitus says, "vultu mitiore mansuescunt," which in fact is the very result that people of this kind wish to produce, "their principle being," as De Quincey says, "that the chief use of a face is, not at all to please one's wife, but to frighten one's enemy." "Nice men these, sir," as Weller whispered to his master, "wery nice notion of fun they has, sir." They'll speak like an Anthropophaginian unto thee. It's only a pity that there's no one on such occasions to cry out with the hostess, glancing at their least fault, "Away, you bottle-ale rascals!" Ulysses was greatly alarmed at the thought of meeting people of this kind when he landed, exclaiming, "Oh me! to what place have I come? Are they all here insolent wretches, and rude and unjust, and having no sense of God in their minds?" though it is true he found a very different company, that ought to have made him rather ashamed of himself for having had such fears on that particular occasion. However, when any individual of such a class is met with who pledges us, though it were in champagne, we expect that every one of our serene brotherhood will reply to him with Apollodorus, "I would rather have taken the cup of poison from Socrates than that pledge of wine from you;" which is an exalted sentiment, that will no doubt accomplish your purpose of escape as effectually as if you had called him a Katachresis and fifty other bad names as suitable. The advice is by no means superfluous. Shall I be believed when I add, that a celebrated Stoic of antiquity, when treating on serene hours, and recommending whatever conduces to them, proceeds for that purpose to prescribe occasional drunkenness? It is quite true however, and you shall have it in his own words: "Nonnunquam et usque ad ebrietatem veniendum, non ut mergat nos, sed ut deprimat. Eluit enim curas et ab imo animum movet, et ut morbis quibusdam, ita tristitiæ medetur*." There are people at this day in England

* Sen. de Tranquillitate Animi.

who formally hold the same medico-philosophical opinion. But one need not delay to notice longer the hostile element in this external and revolting form. Such allies received into our company would strike us of the yellow boat as only a prelude, as a witty author says, to our being ordered away for instant transportation beyond the seas, during the whole term of our natural lives at the very least. And, indeed, only ask young Master Rash, or young Dizzy Copper-spur, or wild Half-can, and each will report that they have done as much for many a gentleman of his house. And yet let me tell your refined creatures, who are already shocked at our allusion to such casualties, as if we were letting out our own low habits, and thinking better company capable of understanding them, that vice, even in this state of robust development, will sometimes contrive to enter in disguised any where; and, in proof, I cannot refrain from giving a curious anecdote which, when I was a child, the late Countess of C—— was fond of relating to us when guests in her own fair castle standing amidst woods, that made romantic whatever was heard under its roof. Fond of the reminiscences of her early youth, she used to tell us that during her education in a convent in the south of France she was accustomed to pass the summer vacation at Rougemont, the country-house of the president of the parliament of Toulouse, which was only a few miles distant from that city. The president's wife used to frequent "les grandes soirées" as well as "les petites soirées," where the high society of that polished capital, which then yielded to no other for its tone, used to meet every week; the former being open to all who presented themselves without any invitation being required. It happened in one of these public assemblies, while our friend was staying at Rougemont, that the president's wife, having played cards at the same table with a stranger of very accomplished manners, who had quite the air of a man of quality, and the information of one familiar with the great world in Paris, from which capital he said he was freshly arrived, on rising invited him to her country-house, saying, "she was sure that the president would be happy to make his acquaintance." Some time elapsed without hearing any thing of him, and she thought no more of the circumstance, till one day, rather to her surprise, the well-bred stranger arrived. He at

once recommended himself to the president, as well as to the circle of the château, by the charm of his conversation and by the singular nobleness of his air and manner. The president found that their new guest knew intimately many of his own ancient friends at the court, and that he was thoroughly informed as to every thing that was actually passing in the great and even political world. So many days passed with much satisfaction to all parties, and nothing seemed wanting to complete the pleasure of their summer days. It was on an afternoon of Sunday, about two o'clock, the party, with the exception of the president, being seated after dinner on the terrace taking coffee,—only think what a serene hour it must have been,—when a laquais hastily approached the lady of the house, at whose side my friend was seated, who remembered each particular as if it had passed only yesterday, and informed her that the president wished to speak to her in his cabinet. She found him in a state of some excitement, with the melancholy of a man in office, holding a letter open, just received, which he placed in her hands. It was from the Prefect of Police in Paris, informing him that the new captain of Cartouche's gang of robbers was somewhere near Toulouse, giving a minute description of his person, and desiring him to procure his arrest as soon as possible. "I need not tell you," said the president, seeing her astonishment, "the nature of my suspicions, and the course that remains for me to adopt." But the lady, recovering herself, replied calmly, that even if their suspicions should turn out to be well grounded, the president ought not to think of arresting one who was an invited guest under their own roof; and besides, she suggested, that he ought first, before committing himself, to communicate with the city magistrates. After some hesitation, whatever the president thought, the husband agreed to do so, and to wait till the next day. Thus encouraged, the lady returned to the terrace, rather paler than when she left it, took the stranger aside, told him what had occurred, and bade him at once say whether or not he was the man. He instantly admitted that he was. "How then am I to save you?" asked the lady. "By enabling me," he replied, "to pass beyond the president's jurisdiction." Her carriage was at the back gate in a few minutes; they two stepped in, and drove to

Toulouse. The streets were crowded with people flocking out of the churches from vespers. Her carriage, so well known, becoming an object of attention, the lady spread out her hoop so as to conceal her companion. By his directions they passed beyond the city gates at the opposite side from that by which they entered it; and, on coming to an eminence near a windmill, a mile or two distant, near the skirts of a wood, he blew a whistle which he had taken from his pocket. After some minutes a horseman was seen to emerge stealthily from the trees, and on the same signal being repeated to return again amongst them. He soon reappeared with some twenty others, who galloped up to the carriage, from which their captain alighted. Then, springing upon one of their horses, he made a profound bow to his deliverer, and assured her that as long as he had the honour of commanding that gallant corps she and her friends might depend on being under his protection. He then trotted off into the wood with all his gang, leaving the lady to make the best of her way home, and reconcile the president to the manner in which she had extricated their house from so disagreeable a dilemma. So here we observe the evil element mixed up with the serene; and truly, in this instance, it was an evil ingredient of horrible intensity; for only a few months before, these brigands had murdered and actually eaten the heart of a young woman, Mademoiselle de Catinet, who was detected in a project to betray them. I have given the story as I heard it, which deserves being, perhaps, preserved from oblivion; and, by the way, it made such an impression on me as a boy that my earliest business on arriving in Paris for the first time was to ask a bookseller for the life of this Cartouche. "Tiens!" he said, looking at me from head to foot; "so he is your hero, is he? Well, I suppose you are right,—a kind of Napoleon in your eyes, n'est ce pas? But, my lad," he continued, "don't let us speak so loud; you can return in three days, and I'll have it for you. But such things," he added, winking at me, "are not sold just now in the regular way of business." I was exact to the appointment, and had the book for my pains, but it was wretched trash, and in most respects rather objectionable. However, this is digressing. Let us return to our London terraces, where, if we do not meet with pre-

cisely Diana's foresters, knights of the shade, minions of the moon, poor rogues, marvellous poor, but all well advised now by their learned counsel in the laws of this land service, we may chance to be elbowing gentlemen, of good government, of a profession somewhat analogous, and, if circumstances favour, of capacities for mischief, perhaps, equally great, who may still contrive to pass in, to the moral detriment at least of those who may succumb to their fascination. The narrative just given no doubt involves a very un-English proceeding; but we have no great reason to flap our wings and crow over the Gallic cock, since breaking a heart, at which some on this side of the Channel are sufficiently expert, is worse than eating it.

The danger, then, of meeting very undesirable company exists, really and actually, under a more insidious composition even on the Thames; and, however unwilling, we must glance at it as so developed.

Junius Mauricus being at supper with the Emperor Nerva and a few select friends, Vejento was placed next to the emperor. "After I have named the man," continues Pliny, "I need say no more to raise your indignation. The discourse turned upon Catullus Messalinus, who had a soul as dark as his body,—a blind instrument of Domitian. The company expressed their horror of his character. 'And what,' asked the emperor, 'would have been his fate had he lived now?' 'To have supped with us,' replied Mauricus drily." There may be no great danger of such a companion joining our lowly party to Kew or Hampstead, or, indeed, if we keep away from the dens that foreign agents haunt, of our falling in with him any where in either Middlesex or Surrey; for, as our old poet says,

> "——— the state of hell must care
> Whom it employs, in point of reputation,
> Here about London."

Yet, even here, it is just possible to meet occasionally with certain envoys from the central government, which, after a diluted fashion, are instruments proper enough for mischief. It is only some one like Pug, begging pardon for presuming on our privacy, introducing himself as born a gentleman, a younger brother, but in some disgrace now with his friends, and wanting

some little means to keep him upright till things be reconciled. So that on the whole

> "They say this town is full of cozenage;
> As, nimble jugglers that deceive the eye,
> Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind,
> Soul-killing witches that deform the body."

We are not, it is true, seeking for such persons now; we are neither desiring "la fidélité des ombres," to use the expression which critics regard as so admirable, nor even with Puck and other fairies,

> "Following darkness like a dream,"

while evening, with her modest veil, gives leave to such poor shadows as are some to steal abroad. But then we cannot suppose all our companions generally to have been so initiated and dyed, as it were, in wisdom and virtue, as to be safe and unchangeable under every possible test to which they can be submitted. Seneca, it is true, being a philosopher, says that nature does not suffer a total mutation in the mind and manners of those who were once what they ought to be. He maintains that falling from the best to the worst a man necessarily retains traces of the former even in evil, as animals once tamed can never wholly throw off when escaped to the wild woods some vestige of their acquired gentleness*. It is an agreeable thought, but it may be traced, perhaps, only to the pride of the Stoic. Facts seem to contradict him: at all events there can be no great security; and, as Roderigo says to the King of Spain in one of our old dramas,

> "——— Your son is full
> Of honourable thoughts; but being young
> May meet with subtle natures, whose oblique
> And partial ends want no dissembled forms
> Of duty to betray him."

There are occasions even when saucy trusting of the cozen'd thoughts defiles the pitchy night, and one may say,

> "——— I stop in fear;
> Though this a heavenly angel, hell is here."

* De Beneficiis, lib. vii.

Do you not see those who "look with ruffian passion in her face?" Here be sweet rascals for people to credit their whole fortunes with! Lord Fitzavarice, in another old play, does not paint an imaginary character when saying of one of your replenished villains of the world

> "———— He is a fellow will
> Undo thee in a fortnight; though not in
> Thy estate, yet in thy mind, a greater mischief."

Then will there soon be some one, though now not a friar, to exclaim—

> "O Giovanni! hast thou left the school
> Of knowledge, to converse with sin and death?"

There is another type to be met with still, even on the river, more plausible, and, if possible, more dangerous, such as Vainman describes:

> "———— 'Tis true he has
> Some pretty parts, is held an excellent scholar,
> Can sing, and dance, and manage a horse well;
> He's born of a good family, can speak
> When he lists, to purpose too, I do confess it;
> But what's all this when a man will be a rascal?"

Oh! there are times and places where it will be well to remember such entreaties and warnings as our old minstrels tell of, as where they represent Lady Anne Bathwell saying,

> "But doe not, doe not, prettie mine,
> To faynings fals thine hart incline:
> Be loyal to thy lover trew,
> And nevir change her for a new:
> If gude or faire, of her have care,
> For women's banning's wonderous sair."

And yet, what even more than this should give us pause, there are blessings from the injured which can wound deeper. There are, perhaps, elsewhere some who say, in allusion to some one of those before us,

> "Curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
> Though thou forsakest a deceived thing;—
> A dove, forlorn and lost, with sick unpruned wing."

Aye, poor betrayed one, it is thus you are served; for when they have your roses, they barely leave you thorns to prick yourselves, and mock you with their bareness. Is it possible, as Shakspeare's Lord demands, that such men should know what they are and be what they are? Oh! very possible. There are still occasions, therefore, for exclaiming with Molière,

> "O juste ciel! faut-il qu'on joigne à tant de grâces
> Les vices odieux des âmes les plus basses?"

There is an honourable vice which knows itself, and despises itself, and strikes its breast. I will not say, continues Lacordaire, that it is dear to God; but God can find a remedy for it. "There is, on the contrary, a vice poisoned by pride, a vice which walks with head aloft, which laughs and mocks. That is what, we aré told from on high, God hates;" and be assured that this obstacle, almost invincible to faith, is utterly incompatible with our precise object in all these excursions. Pride by itself is so insupportable, that God and man prefer humble sin to proud virtue; what is it when associated with sin? with sin boastful? and yet, nothing is less rare. The very pagans, however, seemed to have instinctively felt its hideousness. "The bad," says the Greek poet, "have been born bad; but by forming a friendship with bad men, they have learned deeds of ill, and words of ill, and insolence, thinking that they are saying all that is true." In brief, such conjurers will cause you to lose all relish for the little pleasures of life that are so essential to the enjoyment of serene hours. By presenting you with a too lively dose, and an excitation overpowering, like a magician of a booth they will juggle you out of the former, leaving you only passions and disappointment. There is a double sense, therefore, in the playful remonstrance of a pastoral song, "O dog Lampurus! does so deep a sleep hold you? You ought not to sleep so soundly while tending sheep with a lad." For tell us, young town-skip, though no one expects you to couch with the lamb in order that you may be stirring with the lark, do you expect to enjoy serene hours with such companions, and that, too, perhaps, "when all people are a-bed, when the very owls are in their dead sleep?" "Beware,"

as Lady Peregrine says, "lest sooner or later you have a stained soul."

"———— Ills have such alliance,
As in what subject any one is grown,
The seeds of all, even in that one, are sown."

"Crime," as a famous author says, and, he might have added, a certain spirit, too, that does not carry that title at first, "has but two travelling companions. It commences its journey with the scoffer, and ends it with the blasphemer." And remark too, with a great observer, "that never amongst animals a creature born to be a dove changes into a screech-owl. Such metamorphoses take place only in the human kind, and there they are not imaginary." Yes, the most sheltered nest may warm a viper that can gnaw at the heart of any one, "poisoning all the aspirations that youth would have rendered pure, goodness lofty, knowledge beneficent and divine."

For holidays such as we are concerned with there are wanted what every one understands by amiable girls—good honest boys, good young men, valuable in regard to the service they can render however employed, possessing moral qualities that bear a money value, such as a certain landlord prized in a youth that I know, who, on leaving his service, heard from him the rather ungracious but expressive compliment, that he would as soon have seen his coffin come down stairs as his box. Well, that being the case, know and understand that you cannot have companions of this kind if they are to be subjected often to the contagion of such haunts as might hear the witches' charm,

"Black go in and blacker come out:
At thy going down, we give thee a shout;
Hoo!
At thy rising again thou shalt have two;
And if thou dost what we'd have thee do,
Thou shalt have three, thou shalt have four;
Hoo! har! har! hoo!
A cloud of pitch, a spur and a switch,
To haste him away, and a whirlwind play,
Before and after, with thunder for laughter,
And storms of joy of the roaring boy,
His head of a drake, his tail of a snake."

"How the mind falls and degenerates!" exclaims Richard of St. Victor. "See how in the statue there was first gold, then silver, then brass, and at last iron. What a difference and falling off was there,—from gold to iron, from charity to cruelty, from the abundance of charity to the abundance of iniquity!—'Opus detestabile et dignum confusione, quod inchoatur ex auro, et consummatur in testa et ferro*.'" As poor Ophelia exclaims, "Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be!" "The most fatiguing and incurable malady of man," says Jules Janin, "is remorse. Remorse fastens an enemy to each of your arteries: it curls up your nerves with its breath; it stops the blood; it precipitates the pulses of the heart; it infuses cold through all the limbs; it sits at table in your place; and vainly you turn round among the guests to have part in the banquet. At night, when for a moment you sleep, it lies like lead upon your breast; then it leans over your ears; then it whispers to you; then its voice grows louder; then it bursts forth like thunder till you waken up alone in the darkness. It is a dreadful evil! Remorse is implacable; it assumes all forms, usurps all places. You shut your door with triple locks, and it finds its opening; but it disdains the narrow way. It knocks as a master at your gate: you are forced to open to him, and when the door opens he takes his place at the fireside. If you have a child, he holds him on his knee. He is your guest. You must yield to him the chief place in your heart. Remorse is the only emotion of man which time has not altered. Remorse will be the same for ever."

It follows from observations of this kind, which, as you may perceive, any one can make for himself without being a canon regular, that some little degree of caution is needed in the selection of those with whom we desire to pass our time during any hours; and that it won't exactly do to reply with Ben Jonson's devil, when some one asks who are to be invited,

> "Why any: Fraud,
> Or Covetousness, or Lady Vanity,
> Or old Iniquity, I'll call them hither."

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* De Eruditione Hominis interioris, c. 23.

"All whose spirits, by the way, are so married in conjunction with the participation of such society, that they flock together in consent, like so many wild geese." It is not that we should be guided in our choice, come now, by such rigid maxims as those maintain who call vice all that is not heroic virtue, and who, if there be room for any thing better, think that good itself is a kind of evil; neither is it absolutely necessary that we should have at our elbow on such occasions a man like him described by Cicero, whom he can only describe by exclamations, saying, "Who more ardent in encouraging to virtue! who more sharp in recalling from vices! who louder to blame the bad! who more eloquent to praise the good! who can accuse cupidity with more vehemence*!" For virtue, which is by itself laudable, and without which nothing can be praised, has many parts for people to play, of which all are not adapted for pronouncing either eulogies or blame in such a solemn manner, and especially where there is no direct occasion for them, as under the ordinary circumstances we are supposing. But it is obviously requisite, on the other hand, that our good fellows should not disregard exigencies which even the Pagans deemed reasonable; as when Pliny, for instance, recommending Julius Genitor as a sort of companion for the son of Hispulia, says of him, "Your son will hear nothing from him but what will be for his advantage to know, nor learn any thing of which it would be happier he should be ignorant." Oh! it is a great good to possess what our old dramatist calls

> "A faithful, not a ceremonious friend;
> But one that will stick by you on occasions,
> And vindicate your credit, were it sunk
> Below all scorn,—such a friend
> That when he sees you carried by your passions
> Headlong unto destruction, will so follow you,
> That he will guide you from't; and with good counsel
> Redeem you from ill courses."

On the other hand, as Philippe de Commines says, "l'accointance d'un fol jamais ne profita à la longue." So that, on the whole,

* De Oratore.

we should desire to have with us some one like that Virginius Romanus, supposing him christened, who, as the same ancient worthy says, "places virtuous characters in the most amiable point of view, and when there is mention of them, exposes vicious ones with proper indignation." Pliny speaks of the pleasure which he had received lately from meeting this excellent person, and though no doubt the words of a pagan do not carry with them the same sense in all regards as that which we should attach to them, still what he says of his companions generally, while describing his own serene hours, might be heard with advantage by some of us at the present day, however high we may hold our heads. "At Laurentum," he says, "I often reflect how much of our life is spent in solemn trifles. After I have studied, however, I take recreation; for the body must be repaired if we would preserve the mind in all its vigour. In that peaceful retreat I neither hear nor speak any thing of which I have occasion to repent. I suffer none to repeat to me the whispers of slander; nor do I censure any man unless myself. There I live conversing with myself and my books. True and genuine life! pleasing and honourable repose! More, perhaps, to be desired than employments of any kind! With how many noble thoughts does the scene itself inspire me! Leave, my friend, the noisy city life with all its frivolous pursuits, and devote your days to study, or even resign them to indolence, for it is better to have nothing to do than to be doing nothing."

It has been no digression from our purpose to have noticed the fact that we are liable to fall in with persons of a different character from what Pliny thought desirable company for serene hours, since, as we shall now proceed to suggest more directly, their presence, and conversation, or their thoughts, without their company, if we ourselves are so unhappy as to contract an affinity for them, constitute an atmosphere that can with great difficulty, if at all, be combined for even an instant with the kind of enjoyment that we are supposed to have in view on all these excursions; while either will sooner or later verify the saying of our witty knight, that "though the camomile the more it is trodden on, the faster it grows, yet youth, the more it is wasted, the sooner it wears."

In the first place, then, every one feels instinctively that

there is a certain malady of the soul, of the mind and heart, which

> "Seals a commission to a blank of danger;
> And danger, like an ague, subtly taints,
> Even then when we sit idly in the sun."

It is a wound that heals ill, and which even independent of all grave and lofty considerations, disqualifies the persons who have received it for joining the sort of company we are supposing. Their vulgar prosaic presence constitutes a general difficulty, if not an absolute and immediate obstacle, in the way of serene enjoyment. "Their vile race has that in it," like Caliban's, "which good natures cannot abide to be with." One might say with the foul monster himself, who had somewhat profited under the magician, that if we keep such company "we shall lose our time, and all be turned to barnacles, or to apes with foreheads villainous low"—a remark literally in one regard true, as with innocent youth like those here, alas! only remembered will be seen "the ample forehead, but serene with thought." Without pretending to any over-delicacy of feeling, the plain fact is that this mental taint, which involves a dead heart,—and what more abject, asks Lacordaire, than to kill the heart in man? and all experience proves that the same taint cannot co-exist with any tenderness,—I say the fact is that such a state is more adverse to the purpose in view than would be any thing physically disgusting, though it were as bad as the impoisoned foot of Philoctetes, which was found sufficient cause for his being left where he was, no one daring to touch him, or to come near the effluvia. Those who are thus morally afflicted must not be listened to, or permitted to embark with the rest, no, not even were they to be heard crying out like him, "Come,—the trouble, look you, is not that of one whole day. Determine on it; take and cast me into the boat whither thou wilt, into the hold, the prow, the stern, wherever I am least likely to offend thy mates." We should stop our ears. We have no long spoon on the river. The only proper words on such an occasion are, not for him, Pull away, lads, and leave him there. Unless indeed you prefer to say with the mock fairies, "Pinch him for his villainy."

"Pinch him and turn him, and turn him about,
Till candles, and starlight, and moonshine be out."

This necessity arises from the very nature of things. It is physiologically impossible that it should be otherwise; for in fact, as a lively and justly celebrated French author remarks, "the august science of serene hours," or, as he calls it, of the little pleasures, des petits bonheurs, "is not at the disposition of vulgar minds, of rude gross dispositions, of inactive and depraved souls. On the contrary, it is the charming privilege of elevated minds, of lofty and tender souls, and of innocent sprightly hearts." To comprehend a like happiness on this small scale one must be at least worthy of it, by simplicity of character, by modesty and good grace, and by a certain "I know not what," such as was possessed by Socrates when he played at tables; by Henry IV. when he went on all fours carrying his children on his back; by Malherbe the poet, when he boasted of his knowledge in gloves; by the Prince de Condé when he used to make omelettes; and by the great Turenne when he watched some players at bowls, and was chosen arbiter to determine by laying down a straw which ball was nearest the mark. This little happiness depends on the good disposition of people, and that is why we cannot surround it with too many safeguards against the vicious influence of that lascivious ease which, as our own poet says, gives the first beginning to all ills, a thing above the moon. This taste for serene hours, this constant rejoicing, is the most express mark of those who belong not to the vicious. Seeking life with humility, honest and well conducted, they find it every where; and each of their thoughts is its protection; for them it is in motion, in rest, in noise, in silence, in fancy, and in reality. It is on the river and under the river; it is in the fields and in the garden; it agitates in a thousand ecstasies the delicate fibres of the brain; it is symmetry, it is order and proportion. He who would try to count the little pleasures of our sensible and mental being through all the ineffable joys of creation, would undertake an impossible work—the little pleasures of an innocent life! Who could ever reckon them? The little joy of friendship, the little joy of controlled passion, the little joys of hope, of sound reason, of a serene mind, of an

indulgent heart, of not passing beyond the just limits, of doing one's duty, of going out for the day or for the afternoon with such dispositions, who can describe the intimate satisfaction, the pleasure of feeling the sun or the shade, of seeing the trees and flowers, of hearing the children and the birds?—every thing is a fête, a pleasure, a happiness, for those who are right-minded, and whose hearts are at ease. But as for vicious, and one may truly add, foolish people, they have made but a small progress in this science. Frankly, they would give the whole of it for a new pair of gloves, a silk gown, or a visit to a gambling-room. Nothing more true. In their eyes the field is a desert, the river a weariness, the wood a desolation. They see nothing in these joyous paths, in these fresh pastures, in neither the lamb that plays nor the dog that watches it; they do not see the sparkling wave, nor the swan that moves against it; they do not see how the thorns are covered with flowers, and how the shining stream shows itself and is lost again like a thread of silver. They feel not the pleasures of order, or the happiness of symmetry, or the satisfaction of justice. The sweet odour of the clover, which the sun of June has dried with its smiles, gives them the headache. With them for companions, nothing will please, nothing will suit. No inn is grand enough. They must have antechambers and dressing-rooms at the Angler's Rest; they must have turbot and peaches at the Eel-pie Island, and champagne among the bulrushes; in fine, they are incapacitated by nature and by custom, by disposition of mind and by bodily habits, for the whole order of enjoyments with which you seek to be conversant. As Madame de Stael even says, "You cannot by dint of effort enjoy simple things. To be happy by means of them there must be the absence of other desires."

You see then from all this that the bright, delightful hours we are contemplating have many enemies besides what we first spoke of, clouds and rain, north-east winds, or the reflected sun-rays of the dog-days. We are not concerned now with such persons as pass for very good and very respectable, though as we shall see, on our next trip, not suited for hours like these; but we have to notice such as openly enough proclaim themselves to be worldly and vicious. Your Captain Rooks, for instance, and their haughty lady friends described by Thackeray,

"pretty, proud, hard-favour'd things," as Macilente says, "marry not so peerlessly to be doted upon, I must confess," are not exactly patrons and promoters of this sort of sport. It is clear at once that, though "the boy never need to understand any thing," you are likely to be in trouble sooner or later, and not in peace, as a consequence of their joining your party, even though some two of you have not in consequence to look through a grate like a gemmy of baboons; for, "when the joy of the grape-cluster is present at a feast of such persons, I no longer," with Pentheus, "will say any thing good of their mysteries." "Qui m'aurait proposé une telle vie," said a celebrated French person of the seventeenth century, referring to her own experience, "je me serais pendue." You may hear the same thing repeated at the present day with just as much intensity of feeling from within the fascinated circle. "Je ressemble à quelque forçat qui traine son boulet," says one of the other sex, alluding to the consequences of being in relation with some desperate piece of neglected mortality; though it would be more exact to say perverted. Such persons must find an evident calamity, even though they have their wish. Disorder has in its train deceptions, recriminations, quarrels, and many other such beauties. Peremptory and proud-minded, with oaths kept waking and with brawling fed, it is like two raging fires when they meet together and consume the thing that feeds their fury. It has the little fires that grow great with little wind, though you might think that here were only the extreme gusts that will blow out fire and all. It has tongues inextinguishable that keep up such a hateful unintermittent discord, that after overhearing them for an hour or two once in your life, you will ever afterwards, as long as you live, think mere silence to be something innocent and akin to heaven. Indeed, it is by such eaves-dropping or short glances through a wall like that which enters into the Midsummer's Night Dream, that we can be cured of any hankering after it, and this way might any one take upon himself to wash our liver as clean as a sound sheep's heart, that there shall not be one spot of such love in't. But let us drop the curtain, and peeping through a different cranny, glance at the evil under another form. Would you then think of asking any of these elderly gentlemen, whom our ancestors called whirl-

pits, usurers, to walk out with you, and taste a serene hour? Why, as an old writer says, you would talk to the deaf. His heart and soul with all his senses are got among his bags, or he is gravely asleep, and dreaming of a mortgage. Or would you enjoy much high contentment of soul if you took with you a man of business, with his affections dark as Erebus, in whom to every eye the cares of the world have choked the good seed? "You see, indeed, the shape of a man before you, but his faculties are all gone off among clients and papers, thinking how to defend a bad cause, or find flaws in a good one."

Depend upon it there will be no serenity for you if you take up with any stragglers from such a herd. Why, you simpleton, "they can eat men alive, and digest them," as Shirley says; they have their conscience in a string, and can stifle it at their pleasure. The devil's journeymen set up for themselves.

Well, you are willing to agree to all this; you will avoid such robust iniquity. No more sights! Perhaps a dream or two after witnessing it will cause you to stipulate with Macbeth, "Before I'll endure such another night!"—well, well, we understand you. I believe in your present vein you are pretty safe. You will say, at moments half frightened to death, like Ludwick in the Grateful Servant, on discovering that it is the fiend himself who is speaking to him,

> "———— I am not well;
> —— my bones within
> Are dust already, and I wear my flesh
> Like a loose upper garment."

But then, my dear young fast one, there are others, as we have already hinted, equally hostile to our serenity, who come in a less openly hostile shape, and with whom, perhaps, you think you can enjoy just what you wish for at intervals. But I must tell you as a friend, and freely, that where impossibilities are apparent, 'tis indiscretion to nourish hopes. Now the very countenance of such persons, visibly without a soul, and without a heart, can proclaim the impossibility. As for others of their kin, I admit you are inclined rather to dislike some of their notions of amusement, and to say with poor Cassio, when pressed to drink, "I could well wish courtesy would invent some other

custom of entertainment." "A method of spending one's time agreeably is so little studied," says a writer in the Tatler, "that a common pastime is drinking." No danger of your craving such an indulgence.

> "Thy yeears are young, thy face is faire,
> Thy witts are weake, thy thoughts are greene;
> Time hath not given thee leave, as yett,
> For to committ so great a sinne."

But then even without such barbarism, already glanced at, there are persons to propose other diversions no less hostile though more secret, in allusion to which we should do well to say with Sebastian in the old play,

> "———— I allow a mirth,
> But do not love this madness; and if I
> Might counsel you, there is a way to quench
> These wild licentious flames, earnest of those
> Our souls may feel hereafter."

Please to take note of Seneca's caveat for the fact, where he says, "Sic præsentibus utaris voluptatibus, ut futuris non noceas."

There are still other counsellors occasionally to be met with of whom the presence will not exhilarate you or me, or enable us to breathe an atmosphere of love and peace. They, too, have their modes of directing us; but even on the spot, as far as this delicate and exquisite contentment is concerned, we feel the bitter effects of yielding assent to their suggestions. It will not be true serenity that we experience when they will say to us, for instance, like Bellamente, counterfeiting the devil,

> "You will acquaint some priest or other,
> A tribe of all the world I most abhor,
> And they will fool you with their ghostly counsel,
> Perplex you with some fond divinity,
> To make you lose the glories I have promised."

In reference to such knights, who are often in one sense or other little better than those of industry, as the French call them, it will be no disparagement to your courage if you reply with one of Shakspeare's characters, "I am one that would rather go with

Sir Priest than Sir Knight; I care not who knows so much of my mettle;" for in truth, as the witty knight himself was obliged to confess, "wit may be made a Jack-a-Lent, when 'tis upon ill employment!" But we need not go on describing the sort of people that are to be shunned on such occasions on the score of demerit. In all company of this kind, in a word, we may pass in a thousand different ways a thousand disordered, thwarted, irreligious cursed hours, but a serene smiling one, a really happy, pleasant, joyous one, never. If you should be wavering, or afraid to turn from them in an open and direct way, the best thing to hope for is, that an acquaintance of this sort will have generosity enough (no impossible hypothesis, so loud is conscience in the worst) to speak and act like the Douglas to Roderick, when he said, for other reasons,

> "Nor will I here remain an hour
> To draw the lightning on thy bower."

It remains for us here to observe, that with the thoughts, if we can call them such, even without the bodily presence, of such a company, the result will be as unsatisfactory.

"Poor little creature!" said a lady, Madame de la Marlière, once to a writer, a celebrated Frenchwoman of the romantic school, Pauvre petite! I asked her why she called me so, continues our authoress. She replied, "Be good, my poor child, for the being so will constitute your sole happiness in this world." Such prophetic words made an impression on me. "Shall I be unhappy then?" I asked. "Yes," she answered; "all the world is condemned to chagrin; and remember what I say to you. Be good, for you will have much to pardon; and to pardon will be the sole happiness left to you." She might well have spoken thus. Honour and religion are two sanctuaries which have one character in common so far as relates to the effects of violating them. Men may be ignorant, heaven may delay, but there is a wild genius within, a thing made up of wishes, that will trouble peace, in a wonderful and truly mysterious manner,—a spirit that cannot be appeased, or tamed, or mitigated, or made reasonable by any human means. O then, thou wouldst not think how ill all's there about the heart! troubled with thick-coming fancies that keep her from her rest!

The least deviation from manly honour seems in other results more fatal to what is within us than even the greatest faults of the natural order that do not involve it; and therefore there was much good sense in the remark of a certain father in the old comedy, anxious for the reformation of his son, when he reminded the mother that if the young man were to deviate in this manner, even in the way of complying with their own wishes, and practising in any external form amendment, the ultimate object they had in view, which was his true reformation, instead of being furthered by such conduct, would be rendered less likely to be realized than ever. Similarly, the least secret, spontaneous, knowing, and wanton outrage to the religious sense, which there is reason to believe is a rare crime in England, appears to transcend in its effects whatever can be traced to another source. Perhaps, however, it will be safer for us merely to hear the words of Christian antiquity, as thus delivered by Richard of St. Victor: "Mortal is the sin which a man cannot commit without a great corruption of himself,—mortal what he cannot commit without a grievous injury to his neighbour (and St. Augustine in this includes what attacks civil society),—mortal what cannot be committed without a great contempt for God. All other offences seem to be venial*."

Now, limited fortunately by our humble object, we are not concerned here with suggesting the grave and appalling consequences which are involved in the term employed to designate offences of this former character, to which, notwithstanding, Eubella, in our old play, alluding to one not much above our feather, says,

> "Tell him the punishment in store for crimes;
> This were an angel's office."

All that we rude laity have to observe is, that thoughts, or rather, lawless instincts, leading to them, or flowing from them, are incompatible with the kind of enjoyment which, as constituting happy or serene hours, people propose to themselves setting out for the day a-roving.

* De Spiritu Blasphemiæ.

Impelled by such sinister influences as we have been alluding to, we may wander where we will, and seek what fellowship best suits us, exclaiming, perhaps, in our stupid obduracy,

> "———— Virtue! a word
> There's not a Jew will lend two ducats on;"

or, like Ludwick, in the Grateful Servant, replying, "Some moral exhortations! they are fruitless. I shall never eat garlic with Diogenes in a tub, and speculate the stars without a shirt. Prithee enjoy thy religion, and live at last most philosophically vain." But the immediate consequence will be no less inevitable; it will be that, as even the old poet says, we shall not be able to be at rest for a moment, or endure our own precious company for a single hour:

> "———— adde, quod idem
> Non horam tecum esse potes; non otia recte
> Ponere, teque ipsum vitas fugitivus, ut erro."

"Fie, what a trouble 'tis to be out of a man's self!" We are all liable to be transformed thus, and to feel the truth of Trinculo's complaint. A delicate instrument is the human heart, companion which can never be in tune when a base evil will plays on it! What dull discordant tones, repulsive, fancy-killing, ludicrous, then come from its hollow depths! The very eye, they tell us, becomes vacant, muddy, and dim-looking, like an idiot's stare. How short a time can alter the condition of a man, and make him a creeping thing!

"Diversions, and pleasures, and sports," says Balzac, "do not cure souls that are diseased. They are not true remedies. They are simple amusements of the sick. They don't give health. They deceive and send the patient to sleep. They produce only intervals of less pain; artificial, they last but a short time; to be permanent and efficacious they must spring from the source, and nature must be content. The contentment must be in the heart, otherwise it is only so much paint and powder on the face, which the least accident dispels, and which falls away at the first ray of truth. Virgil, therefore, puts these kinds of joy in hell, and calls them bad joys. Do you think that those of unprincipled people are much better? Look at that cruel

Theodoric after the death of Symmachus. He is seated at a table of gold and ivory, loaded with the tribute of provinces from sea and land. That is not enough. Besides flowers, and perhaps it was in winter that this charming fête was given, besides foreign fruits and other things out of their season, there was something more delicate and less material to flatter the mind through the senses; there were perfumes; there was, oh, shame and calamity! music; there was, oh, phenomenal horror! the presence of beauty in persons, which, if the tale be true, but one may doubt it, for real beauty is not seen side by side with a murderer, though he were a king, was sadder still. Theodoric thought he would do the exact thing and have a serene hour. But all of a sudden, when the head of a great fish was served before him, he fancied and cried out that it was the bleeding head of Symmachus from the other world that was brought up. 'Avaunt, and quit my sight!' There was an end of his serenity. He has given peace to all the earth, and he has not been able to give it to himself." But take one more example from history before returning to common life, such as we are engaged in at the present day. "Tiberium," says Tacitus, "non fortuna, non solitudines protegebant, quin tormenta pectoris suasque ipse pœnas fateretur." Tiberius seems to ask the pity of those to whom he is the terror. "Quid scribam vobis," he says, "patres conscripti, aut quomodo scribam, aut quid omnino non scribam hoc tempore? Dii me dæque pejus perdant quam perire quotidie sentio, si scio." And history adds, his crimes were his punishments. "The holy Scriptures," remarks Balzac, "and the holy fathers who explain them are every where agreed with history, that there is no punishment like that of the conscience, when the criminal is the same person as the executioner. Divine justice is sometimes exercised secretly, abandoning the wicked to their own thoughts. The palace seems full of gaiety. All without is brilliant and magnificent; but the place of punishment is the closet or the garden, the interior of the man, the depths of his soul." Coming down to the times and scenes in which we move, we see daily, as Shirley says, how

"——— we were born free, and had
From the great Maker royal privilege,

Most brave immunities, but since have made
Tame forfeit of our charter."

Some one says in an old play—

"Thou hast stolen my virtue from me;
I have not power to think a harmless thought."

Indeed we need seek no further than these very dramas to witness the total absorption of all true cheerfulness and joy. The picture unfolded in them of the vices in England during the reign of the Stuarts and first Georges, and even down to times not far removed from our own, makes one feel dull. One is made half ashamed and half melancholy even by looking at it. The reality, one might think, ought to have been enough to verify Terence's prediction, and convert any one through sheer disgust at what was represented, not to deter him from vice, but for his approval, or, at least, for his mirth. "Oh," as poor Eubella says in one of those old plays, "what modest names are used there to apparel ugly, selfish vice!" And yet the truth that immediately concerns us to notice will out, even in their polluted scenes, as when the page says of his master—

"Although the narrow tie of duty bind me
To the discharge of his commands, which it
Becomes no servant to dispute, I meet
Honest employments with more cheerfulness."

And when offered money to buy gaiters and roses, he says,

"——— When I go upon
Wrong, evil errands, madam, I take money,
There is no other benefit belongs to 'em;
But good ones pay themselves. I am rewarded."

Confident in one of these dramas says,

"——— Let violent fools
Brag of their souls; no matter what they say,
A coward dares in ill do more than they."

That's all very fine; but the truth is, that the pains of cowardice are among the consequences of ill-doing,—

"O Dieu! qu'en peu de temps on a vu d'aventures,
Et qu'un fourbe est contraint de prendre de figures!"

Can there be mirth when

"To the sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss?"

Can there be serenity where there is constant fear of detection? "'Tis a portentous sign that instant," says Libanus, in Plautus, "when a person who sweats trembles." On the sultriest day in summer you will witness shivering where that dread exists—

"Ah, Fear! ah, frantic Fear!
I see, I see thee near,
I know thy hurried step, thy haggard eye!
I see thee start, see thee disorder'd fly!"

Where can we hope to enjoy a calm cheerful hour, when we suspect or dread the known and the unknown, as if each were coming with half Kew or Richmond at his heels to search for us; when we are out of humour and nervous, like the gamester who rated a strange boy in the street for being always at the same work of tying his shoe, though he had never seen the lad before in his life; being ready to say of the first chance comer what Mendoza predicates of Pedro,

"——— Methinks
He hath every day a more discovering look.
There's scaffolds in his face?"

"His silence, his not daring to answer me a word," says the Duc de Saint-Simon of a certain guilty noble, "would have seemed to me incredible, if I had not seen proved experimentally, daily during eight years, that crime has a crushing weight even for the most wicked, the most impudent, the most fenced round by station, and who, besides, have the greatest resources in themselves*." And, in fine, even supposing that all remains without us undisturbed and undiscovered, still, as Leontio says

* Tom. xiii. 246.

in another ancient drama, "The forfeit of our serene hours must no less be paid sooner or later."

> "Thou wouldst imagine many fine devices;
> But after all these pleasures, as there is
> A limit, and a period set, what will
> Succeed these raptures, when they are past enjoying,
> But leave so many stings upon our thoughts?"

We are come to the last division of this ugly subject, and have to observe—a lesson ever fresh, for all its repetition—namely, that the well-known thing called goodness, or principle, or honour, or conscience, or what you will, is an indispensable element in the composition of a serene hour. Yes, though "virtue alone, in its purely human orbit, is not our true and last end," nevertheless it is an element that must enter into all serenity, "for hence," as St. Augustine says, "is the tranquillity of order." While the passions govern there is a succession of opposite and painful moments, and there is no rest in the joy that follows, but with virtue there rises a great and delicious calm; so that by means of this old ingredient,—be it said without offending ears fastidious, though we have never entered any "palaces," or learned their vocabulary,—we can have, according to a better nomenclature than theirs, "the cream of the valley," the "out and out," the "no mistake," the "good for mixing," the "regular flare-up," and a dozen other really wholesome and delightful draughts, which Socrates would not have shrunk from naming, when derived from the purest fountain of common human enjoyment. Aye, and without any great harm, we can make the welkin dance indeed; we can rouse the night-owl in a catch that will draw three souls out of one weaver,—we can do that, and give no one cause to blame either, if you except the way of expressing it, and put it into other words that are more redolent of the respectable. Of course, this remark is by no means a new one; it is a truism, if you will, but it is a lesson also, as the poet says, good for poor and rich alike:

> "——— quod
> Æque pauperibus prodest, locupletibus æque."

It is a lesson, too, equally needed by the simple and the learned. The former can find it in the song of the ancient bard,—

"Keep in the king's highway,
And, sober, you cannot stray.
If thou admire no wicked elf,
The halter may go hang itself.
Take wine and be merry, for vice is a folly,
And dwells in the house of Melancholy."

The latter are supplied with it even by the very poets who are often thought to neglect or contradict it. It is he who, above all, invokes, in an Epicurean sense, serene hours, that says,—as if constrained, like the false prophet, by an angel from the sky,—"Place me where you will, where, under rains perpetual, no tree is cheered with summer air, or where, on the contrary, heat alone is insupportable,

'Sola me virtus dabit usque tutum,
Sola beatum.'"

Every one knows, indeed, that this old literature to which his works belong has contrary voices and lessons that are in little harmony with all that we have been trying to express. But this whole world of the Anacreontic muse, apart from the sweetness of its language, which St. Augustine himself would accept as a divine gift, is to us, with that one exception, nothing, or worse than nothing. No one now can have a religion of corruption, as when men believed in Jupiter's intrigues. No one now can ever attain to breathe the exact atmosphere that Horace and Anacreon breathed; the thing is impossible. There will be always the remembrance of some good boy brother, some good industrious sister, or of some Christian parent, aye, or even of some tender heart attached to your own, to cloud the counterfeit serenity. After all our pains some elements will be wanting to constitute a likeness; and some new infusions from which we thought to free our cup will mix with our artificial composition, to render its character and its results different. Do what we will, invoking a short life and a merry one, we cannot be Pagan Epicureans now. Short it may be made; alas! each year can witness proof. May God accept that penalty! But merry, no. The very children of pleasure abuse when they desire to spend a really free and jocund holiday,—give up their line of business for the nonce, discover or feign some excuse, contrive to slip away from this

person or that, or find a reason for absenting themselves, when seeking a change of company, and so, being delivered from these confusions, come to a tacit agreement virtually to observe the wise ancient rule,—"Lude et age conceptiones tuas, et non in delictis." Nay, one may have even seen in an involuntary burst of laughing, recalling mere juvenile fun, from people that seemed rather surprised at their own assurance, innocence return to two parties met by chance, that seemed rather inclined to forget it. One may have seen that young, innocent laugh, mutually spontaneous, discountenance and quite put out those who, in a thoughtless moment, were affecting ways not usual to them. One may have seen them checked by it, thrown back, and sent on their several ways, as inoffensive and cheerful as before. The two things could not exist together, and in that instance merriment carried the day. Of every spot, therefore, whether grove or garden, to which we direct our boat or footstep, for the sake of enjoying ourselves thoroughly in a serene hour, we should say, if it were only with a view to the delights we expected from it, in the words of the Church on Holy Saturday, "Procul hinc, jubente te, Domine, tota nequitia diabolicæ fraudis absistat. Nihil hic loci habeat contrariæ virtutis admixtio; non insidiando circumvolet, non latendo subrepat, non inficiendo corrumpat." To be strict and plain, serene hours are made what they are not by an ecstatic joy, but by peace in the soul. Peace is not felicity, but, as an eloquent voice remarks, "if any thing precedes felicity on earth, if this sovereign good has its temple and portico, a mysterious shade which serves it for precursor, questionless peace will be that shade, that portico, that unutterable and sacred something which is not God nor his sanctuary, but which gives a presentiment of what is to come." The Stoics passed beyond the limits of truth in saying that virtue is happiness. But the Saviour of the world defined it by that immortal sentence, "My peace I leave with you." If any one, therefore, desire to enjoy the hours that our friends are speaking of, he must transfer to that project the rule which Horace prescribed to the poet,—

"Cum tabulis animum censoris sumet honesti."

And however learned and delicate in the refinement of our no-

tions, however initiated in all the secret doctrines of the pleasure-seeking philosophers of old, if we are ever led to study and inquire how we can have peace and happiness,—even sprightliness and fun,—or how, as the poet says,

> "Qua ratione queas traducere leniter ævum,
> Quid minuat curas,"

we shall have to turn from them, with all their affected levity, empty boasts, and real heaviness, to the great natural, revealed, popular, and traditional principles of human conduct which are centered in the teaching of Christianity; which, before such an audience as ours, we need not be always speaking of as divided, because, forsooth, some men have been labouring to make it out a divided or sectarian thing, or pretending that it can never be sufficiently defined by the ancient and ever-venerable word to which we unsophisticated common people should throw kisses as it flies from our lips. "Before these great moral truths," says M. de Sacy, "the interminable discords of philosophers are put to silence. In these the mind reposes when fatigued by idle researches; it feels in them on solid ground, in an asylum of peace, inaccessible to the systems of schools or individuals." Henceforth philosophy may do what it likes with life and human conduct; it would not be worth while to follow it or control it. We prefer, in finishing the day, hearing such lines as only recall our school hours:—

> "Causando nostros in longum ducis amores.
> Et nunc omne tibi stratum silet æquor, et omnes
> (Adspice) ventosi ceciderunt murmuris auræ;
> Hinc adeo media est nobis via, namque sepulcrum
> Incipit apparere Bianoris. Hic ubi deusas
> Agricolæ stringunt frondes, hic, Mœri, canamus;
> Hic hœdos depone; tamen veniemus in urbem."

There once arrived, they take their courses

> "East, west, north, south; and, like a school broke up,
> Each hurries towards his home."

CHAPTER VIII.

AM going to start to-day with a proposition that, to those who know nothing of the philosophic Hesiod, will sound like a paradox; it is that, as a general thing, half a day on the river is better than a whole one; *πλέον ἥμισυ παντός*. There it is in Greek to relieve them; and moreover, I am going to produce an instance in regard to which I must beg leave to differ from the Prince de Ligne, when he said very truly with regard to other occasions, that the "happiest days are those which have a long morning and a very short evening." We, on the contrary, like to sit out all "black vesper's pageants," thinking, in despite of Marlowe, that nought is

> "——— fairer than the evening air,
> Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars."

Then each of us will tell the time to any business that we think befits the hour, saying with Petruchio, albeit for a different reason,—

> "It shall be what o'clock I say it is,"

though, on the other hand, in expeditions of this kind, we seldom aspire to such protraction as "to come home with the milk in the morning," which is another reason, perhaps, for commending them in hearing of the prudent. I know, indeed, that occasionally a whole day,

> "From morn to noon, from noon to dewy eve,
> A summer's day,"

may be absolutely necessary when it is a question of toiling so that Jason's enterprise was all secondary to it, and one has to verify for oneself those charms of "the four parts of the day" of which poets like Bernis, afterwards the celebrated cardinal, have left us a versified description. I know, indeed, that, as

Malherbe says,—going, however, perhaps a little out of the way in order to suggest a melancholy thought,—

> "Tout le plaisir des jours est en leurs matinées ;
> La nuit est déjà proche à qui passe midi."

I know, at all events, what a pleasant thing the peep o' day is on the river or in the garden ; what it is to watch the lark preparing to leave his furrow, and to behold the sun lighting up o'er the earth the shining chariot of his four steeds, and the stars flying from this light of the ether into sacred night.

> "See ! the day begins to break,
> And the light shoots like a streak
> Of subtle fire ; the wind blows cold
> While the morning doth unfold."

I know the pleasure of watching how the chilly dews of night dry upon the seats of the yellow boat, as the lofty poplars before Orleans' villa illumined, receive the revolving wheel of day ; and, descending from such classical illusions, I know how every incident participates, as it were, in the freshness and illumination of the morning, and with what pleasure one may remember long afterwards the least item, though it were only the having been asked at such an hour by a countryman in a smock frock, —golden then, for all its snowy intention,—whether you had met his wheelbarrow with straw floating down, having been carried off the bank just below Strawberry Hill by last night's flood ! For the Thames, in a small way at least, is a thief that will steal any thing—a beam of wood, a basket, clothes left to dry, a child's toy ; all's good that comes to his hand. He will play with any thing, as Jules Janin says of the Rhone. And this incident of his being strongly suspected, if not caught in the flagrant act, of pilfering the barrow, would not perhaps have been disdained by the Italian poet Meli ; for he introduces a herdsman asking a shepherdess if she had seen a cow of his, and accosting her with, "O shepherdess with the waving locks, who make a penthouse over your eyes with your left hand, for fear of embrowning your pretty face !" &c. All this, I know, is very delightful ; but then, when the days are very long,

"Ωρη ἐν εἰαρινῇ, ὅτε τ' ἤματα μακρὰ πέλονται,

a whole day's expedition lasting such a number of hours requires sacrifices, and many previous and perhaps difficult arrangements. Besides, not to speak of business, which has such claims on all of us, "sothely," as Chaucer says, "the morn tyde is most convenable to a man to say his prayers, and for to think upon his God, and to give almes to the poor that first cometh in the name of Christ." The morning even with your old Romans, though to be sure we don't want to copy them in our proceedings, was always given to religion and to business, the afternoon to amusement either laborious or serene, and during this latter portion of the day alone, they said that they lived; for that is the meaning of the lines—

> "Sex horæ tantum rebus tribuantur agendis;
> Vivere post illas littera ζητα monet."

The letter ζ signifies seven, which answers to one o'clock with us, and begins the word ζην, to live. Asinius Pollio, whom Horace calls the most brilliant light of the Senate, used to work indeed till four o'clock, but after that hour, Seneca tells us that he would not so much as open a letter. Cato even used in the afternoon to play at games of ball. The generality used either to divert themselves with some kind of gymnastic exercise, or take evening walks or a ride, 'gestatio.' Cicero thus talks of spending the afternoon in the lonely alleys of the Academy. About three o'clock every one went to swim, and so passed the whole of the afternoon, somewhat in the same way, you perceive, that we, without thinking about all this, propose *. As a general rule, therefore, the morning expedition is not so much the thing, whether you abide by what antiquity practised, or by modern usage; whereas your afternoon trip and your long evening, besides their being more easily achieved, include a pleasant consciousness of your having, in accordance with general custom, done somewhat before you started; for we have no drones in our society, let me tell you again, nor yet such superfine ladies and gentlemen as the Florentine describes, who used to begin each day forsooth by weaving chaplets of flowers and dancing in a

* L'Abbé Couture, De la Vie privée des Romains, Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscript. tom. i.

garden. Moreover, this commencement of our trip at a later hour involves, besides, a well-grounded hope that the time will not hang heavy on your hands for an instant, and that all you need think of is how greatly you must enjoy yourself, purely, instantaneously, absolutely, and to the last moment of daylight. There is also to be taken into account the satisfaction that such an arrangement may impart to some lukewarm amateurs of boating, chiding us for always talking or filling our letters with talk about water, who would much prefer looking at a bonnet to hearing the wear roar, persons only pressed into our service for the occasion, who will be sure to applaud cordially any curtailment, and say with the poet,

> "Si notre esprit n'est pas sage à toutes les heures,
> Les plus courtes erreurs sont toujours les meilleures."

So let it be with us to-day, and, as for the place where, let the lock of Teddington be our farthest destination. The time when? About the sixth hour, when, as Armado writes, beasts most graze, birds best pick, and men begin to think about that nourishment which is called supper. So much for the time when.

Having on our last expedition tried to get rid of the Don Juans, with all their ill-sorted, heterogeneous company, for perversity knows strange companions, young and old,—it will look, I am afraid, like quarrelling with all the world when we proceed to demur as to admitting amongst us their professed enemies, persons of another very large and influential class, constituting what is pretty generally known by the designation of the world. But never mind; for I have heard it said "Unbidden guests are often welcomest when they are gone." An Englishman's boat, or his marrow-bone stage, is his castle; and we must be quite as inexorable now, which we can be, perhaps, with more consistency into the bargain. Here we can hold our heads well up while saying, "Suffer persons of this latter kind also to go their ways; may there be a fair wind to them departing to a distance from our sight." I am dull till they are fairly gone; and you shall know the reason presently, when we shall all be of the same mind on that point, or I never pulled a mile on the Thames in my life.

However, though this will be a wide swoop, we may from the

outset take comfort, for we shall find later that using the phrase as we intend to do, after leaving worldliness behind, a little to disquantity our train, there will be remaining quite a sufficient number, in all conscience, of our fellow-creatures, of all classes, to pick and choose out of, even though there should be yet a few more to be eliminated, and bid adieu to as being for still other reasons unqualified; for indeed, happily, we of the Thamesian provinces, a singing, whistling, laughing, shouting, and not affected race, are never in the position of Petrarch, when he was unable at Avignon to find a suitable companion to join him on his expedition to the top of Mont Ventoux. "What is very singular," he says, "among my many friends I could not discover a single one that seemed fitted for this expedition, so rare is it to find even among people who like each other best a perfect accordance in taste, and will, and manner of thinking. One seemed to me to be too lively, another too slow; this one was too gay, that one too melancholy: here's a fellow, I said, too slight and delicate to bear the fatigue, but that other so fat and unwieldy could never do it. This one is too petulant, too much of a chatter-box, that other is taciturn and too solemn. All these defects, which friendship can tolerate at home and in town, are insupportable on a trip for pleasure. In fine, even if I could find suitable comrades in all points proper, ten to one but either they would have business to prevent them from coming with me, or they would not have the same inclination for the thing as myself, and I should not like to put their complaisance to the test *." Just fancy the shadow of such difficulties occurring to any one of our brotherhood in London, as if he would not think that much of this variety was an excellent thing to have on board with him; or as if he could not find fellows, kids of his own heart, that were wholly unobjectionable in regard even to such attributes!

But to proceed.

We say, then, without meaning to offend any of the respectable classes, whether British or foreign, that persons on this quest of serene hours must be excused for declining to take as companions men or women whose thoughts and manners con-

* De Sade, Mémoires pour la Vie de Pétrarque, tom. i. 28.

stitute what is called the worldly character. Show off where you can. You are not for all markets. Cry the individuals mercy, love them at a distance, but they come not here with their mind, though the character, I admit, can be met with in all grades of society; so that we are not in the least meditating a league with any one class to the prejudice of another, as long as it forms merely one of the classes of a monarchy animated by the spirit that ought to belong to it. It is certain, indeed, that the persons we allude to, whatever be their social status, have no great longing to join such a party as we are supposing going out for a day's amusement; but were it otherwise, it is no less true that you could make nothing of them if they were by any accident to be brought in contact with it. As was said of a spirited horse and an unwieldy rider, you would only prove to each other a mutual embarrassment. It is often thought that those who are for keeping aloof from such elevations are perverse spirits, or proud disagreeable people who would trouble the established order of things and the reigning custom for the sole pleasure of doing what is wrong; but as some one observes, these lovers of serenity are nevertheless instances to show the injustice and inconsistency of such representations, for they shun them calmly and without bitterness, merely through a regard for what their own enjoyment requires.

But what in the first place are we to understand in the way of real life, discarding all mere phraseology, by this term, which is synonymous with disqualification for an excursion of the kind we are considering? Worldliness! It is a hackneyed term if you will, often misapplied, perhaps, for, as Butler shows, Christians at the present day are not in all respects in the position of those in primitive times, when, with idolatries all around them, they were taught to consider themselves as not of the world in which they lived, but as a distinct society with laws and ends and principles of life and action avowedly quite contrary to those which the world possessed at that time *. Nevertheless still, even to popular ears, the term is sufficiently explicit. The thing that it implies is threefold: there is the worldliness of the great and respectable, and of their servile imitators, which

* Sermon on Human Nature.

is what is generally understood by the term; there is the worldliness of the religious and grave, as seen, one must crave leave to suggest, in people like Madame de Maintenon, whose ruling passion was to be "considered," and to hate whatever could cause her to be less regarded as a person unique, who would never take counsel of her heart even in the last emergency, but still act the cold stately part recommended by a sinister kind of discretion and by routine, just as some Catholics at the present day are more worldly than any other class of the community. There is, in fine, what we have already noticed under another title, and what may be passed over here, that which entails a fresh sting and ugliness of its own even amidst transgressions,—the worldliness of the impious and the profligate. It is with the first of these alone that we shall be now confronted; and, I must repeat it, in objecting to this character no one can justly be suspected of malevolence towards any class. "We wot well," as is said in the Persone's tale, "that there is degree above degrée as reason is;" and Christian philosophers go farther, for in defence of capital and riches they actually undertake to prove that political economy, apart from the chimeras which usurp its name, is nothing else but morality found in the phenomena of the world of matter. For instance, they bid us remark that "production of riches" means labour, intelligence, and economy—consummation of riches signifies liberty and foresight, and that distribution of riches means justice and charity*; so that the formulas of science are just so many precepts of our faith†. The interest of serene hours, therefore, involves no crusade against property of any kind, nor no want of interior respect for those who administer it properly and as becomes Christians. Without doubt what we want for our intervals of enjoyment can be found in all ranks, and what we object to, as destructive of the same, may be found in all. In every question of this kind there is a grave distinction to make. "There is," as a French writer observes, "in all grades of society a side changeable and perishable constituting worldliness; and a side that is immortal, poetical, and divine, conformable, as far as it goes, to beauty, and truth, and goodness. The changeable and perishable side is the

* Cochin. † Ibid.

worldly clothing, what few in reality like to think about, the visible bonds which connect men with the deformities of worldliness ever changing; the immortal side is the soul, the divine truth which soars above each group to draw it towards a certain state of soundness on which it is charming even to think, —it is goodness, poetry, spirituality, or the Christian religion." This condition, or whatever you please to call it, is not affected by lowliness or by greatness. The latter, in its stateliest form, can enter into combination with it. St. Francis de Sales, for instance, says to M. de Villars, archbishop of Vienne, who shrank from grand titles, "The most worthy prelates of the Church of God have allowed themselves to be addressed as Lords; for this title regarded their order; and not only may I call you, my Lord, following their example, but it is expedient and right that I should do so*." "I am now at Thier," he writes to a friend, furnishing an example in point, "belonging to my see, where formerly the people were obliged by a formal act of acknowledgment to keep silent the frogs in the ditches while the bishop slept. That seems to me a hard law, and I don't mean to have it kept as far as I am concerned. Let the frogs croak as long as they like, so as they don't bite me. I shall sleep in spite of them if I am sleepy†." So, you perceive, under even the feudal forms, "the immortal side" may be uppermost. Whatever be the epoch, therefore, in these respects, we have very little interest in the differences between the aristocratic and democratic spirits. The antagonism of tastes, habits, and literature disappears. It is the privilege of this latter state to smooth down these differences, to embrace equally all phases of humanity, to apply to all the variations of man its own sublime immortality, to be able always and every where to ennoble and to elevate those minds and hearts subject to it, whether it takes them from the summits of social greatness or from the lowest plebeian level. What we object to, therefore, is that which imparts to every class, when received into it, and to every epoch of society, whatever be the predominant spirit, whether aristocratic or democratic, the worldly character which will be found to consist generally—besides what is at all times intrinsic to it

* Lett. 109. † Ibid. 124.

—in an exaggerated expression of the peculiar faults which may belong to the age, in a perverting and pushing to an excess its particular spirit, so as to offend against beauty, truth, and goodness. Thus violence and oppression, hard lordships through which men were destroyed by talliages and customs, taking from their underlings things that their lords never gave them, as saith Chaucer's Persone, constituted the worldliness of the upper classes in the feudal ages, when the poet's lines would sometimes have been justified on witnessing an individual caprice—

> "Tout bien considéré, je te soutiens en somme,
> Que scélérat pour scélérat,
> Il vaut mieux être un loup qu'un homme."

Duelling, when men like Norfolk,

> "As gentle and as jocund as to jest,
> Go forth to fight" ——

extravagance, and bad taste carried to a positive vice, took their place in the seventeenth century as the prominent feature. Pride and exclusiveness, with what Chaucer would have called "dampnable despite of underlings," characterize it in our own times, with, of course, some dregs of all the rest remaining; while in the lower ranks of each epoch, worldliness, if we wanted to detect it there, might be witnessed in a vicious imitation, or in as vicious an antagonism, corresponding to the opposite faults of superiors. Classes, therefore, have really little to do with the subject before us. The middle and upper grades may be more favourable to the growth of such forms, and therefore in that light they may recur to one oftenest; but the threefold worldliness may be found in all ranks. So dismissing, as quite irrelevant, the question of comparative exemption, let us try to take a nearer view of this offensive aggregate, and ascertain in more detail what it really consists in. We might say of it with the poet, "'Tis a spirit; sometime it appears like a lord, sometime like a lawyer, sometime like a philosopher; he is very often like a knight, as often like a tradesman, like a mob orator; and generally in all shapes that man goes up and down in, from fourscore to thirty, this spirit walks in."

Richard of St. Victor will trace for you its country, as it

were, and with even its pedigree into the bargain; and the words are not too grave to be repeated any where. "There is the world," he says, "the fabric of the world, which is always of God, never of the Evil One. There is the world of which God is the Saviour, 'sic Deus dilexit mundum;' and there is the world of which the Evil One is prince, by which we understand the pride and concupiscence of the age; and this third world, as far as relates to evil actions, is always of the Evil One; but in respect to the ordering or disposal of bad actions, is always of God. For though God is not the author of evil, He disposes of it, for it cannot escape from his dominion, but it receives from Him its ordination*." In less solemn language we might say, that this third world, besides other fruits, yields what is termed even by the old poets "the vulgar;" for observe, I pray you, that it is when about to show how a happy life is not placed in riches or honours that Horace breaks forth in the well-known line,

"Odi profanum vulgus et arceo."

The common people, or, as you would say, the lower orders, were not in his thoughts when he resolved to despise "the malignant vulgar." It was a large portion of what we should designate as society par excellence that he had in view. Let us be ever so willing to make concessions to people of greatness and social distinction, there can be no question as to that point.

But what more can be discovered relative to the character, to the physiology, if we may so speak, of this third world? Surely, some people will say to you, it is much belied by grave, or sarcastic, or romantic writers. Oh, no doubt they are right. It is an innocent loving thing, quite enchanting when it puts on a smile, and there is something to gain from you. But, as the old rat said of the cat in ambush,

"Ce bloc enfariné ne me dit rien qui vaille,
Rien ne te sert d'être farine.
Car quand tu serois sac, je n'approcherois pas."

Questionless, it has a sweet cool unconcerned air, a little strained though at times, when it is thinking mischief. It showed itself

* In Apocalyps. lib. iii. c. 8.

thus in Gloster, the moment before his wrath fell outwardly on Hastings. "My lord of Ely," said its votary on that occasion, "when I was last in Holborn, I saw good strawberries in your garden there: I do beseech you send for some of them." "His grace looks cheerfully and smooth this morning," observes his marked victim. "There's some conceit or other likes him well when he doth bid good morrow with such spirit. I think there's ne'er a man in Christendom can lesser hide his love or hate than he, for by his face straight shall you know his heart. Marry, with no man here he is offended." This is said just a few minutes before he hears, "Thou art a traitor: off with his head!" Of course, this is a typical or standard specimen of the thing, as naturalists would say, and we cannot always see it on this colossal scale. But the praise of the strawberries with a sinister sequel in some shape, is at all times very characteristic of its manner. Yes, I wish you were to see it in smaller proportions only when its fancied rights and true distinctions are a little touched, when it has occasion to consult some one who has more money, as is said in an old play, "than all his profession had got since the dissolution of the abbeys." I wish you were to see it embodied in that wise Maslin, saying, "Take such a one to your legal malice." I wish you were to see it reflected back in that Travers when he replies to him,

> "——— Master Maslin,
> I'll tame his blood and his estate by law,
> While you shall crack your spleen with mirth and laughter,
> And wonder at my subtle arts to vex him.
> All this is reason, and shall be done by law."

Oh, I wish you were unhoodwinked, and could see it then!

Philippe de Commines, speaking of the interview between two persons who were worldliness embodied, I mean Louis XI. and his worthy sister, says, "Both were in a great hurry to be gone their several ways. Both were very joyous at the departure of the one from the other, for they knew each other well, and on that account were the more anxious about it."

But this is beholding it invested with all its prerogatives; and not every one has the right of entrance to observe it then. On the small scale on which it comes across us here, it is not

easy to paint it with a few touches. We may try, however, to delineate it somewhat in this way: "It seeks not to be conspicuous, seen with others, but to be distinguished, separated from others*." It prevents people absolutely from being ever able to form an estimate of matters, concerning which, not from opinion and favour and so on, but from the nature of things we should form our judgment. Above all, it scorns whatever is romantic. Take that for a law of its existence. Of men of the world Young says,

> "They, who think nought so strong of the romance,
> So rank knight-errant as a real friend."

"Quixotism and Utopianism are accordingly," as Mr. Ruskin remarks, and he might have added Ultramontanism, "among its pet words." As for its liberalism and all that, it would never adopt Chaucer's etymology in the instance of magnificence, saying, that "this cometh when a man performeth great works of goodness." Its "mind is not heroic, and there's the humour of it." Yet, in a certain sense, it is the affecting of honour, of which, as Richard of St. Victor says, "the first kind is the affecting of false liberty, the second of dignity, the third of authority, the fourth of power†." We may fear that it does not covet wealth for the reason that riches give a man precise knowledge of himself; for, as Sir Moth Interest profoundly remarks, when a man is rich he straight with evidence knows whether he have any compassion or inclination unto virtue or not, where the poor knave erroneously believes that if he were rich he would build churches; but it does covet wealth, though without any such thoughts; for Brains, in the old play, reveals the spirit at least that suggests one object of its ambition, saying, "Hear my wish out; ten thousand pounds in a musty coffer, a house well furnished, acres enough of my own about it, fifty ploughs a-going, twenty horses in the stable, besides a caroch and six Flanders mares; ten tall knaves in livery, eight velvet pages, six footmen in cadis." So you see it is still pretty much the same as described in the Augustan age:

> "——— quot pascit servos? quot possidet agri
> Jugera? quam multa magnaque paropside cœnat?

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* A. De Vere.

† De Eruditione Hom. Inter. iii. 13.

Quantum quisque sua nummorum servat in arca,
Tantum habet et fidei. * * *
Et genus et virtus nisi cum re vilior alga est."

That it should be found in certain modern circles, for instance, among those families that Ben Jonson speaks of as being as ancient as any are in Europe, namely, the La-Fooles of the north, having a branch settled in London, and in Essex, and in fact in the west and south, and all descended lineally of the French La-Fooles—need astonish no one; but, what is wonderful, one finds traces of it in primitive times. It seems very strange that Homer, for instance, should have represented his couple of young men, when at dinner, conversing in the house of Menelaus, not about their adventures on the way, or their late bath, but, as Athenæus observes approvingly, about the riches of their entertainer, and the costliness of his furniture. All we can say is, that such talk now-a-days, on one of our excursions, would bear an ugly name in persons of their years. In fact, it would rather look like making rank and wealth a sort of idol, which is one result of the very thing that we are deprecating. Opposed to such worship love itself is unknown, which is not indeed strange, if we credit the genealogy of Love as given by Plato, who affirms that Poverty was its mother. But pray take especial notice of that consequence, so important and advantageous as it is thought in some sense. Of course, no one requires to be told that without money to a certain extent, however small,

"——— the lovers whose affections
Do sympathize together in full pleasure,
Debarr'd of this, their summer sudden ends;
And, care, the winter to their former joys,
Breathes such a cold blast on their turtle bills."

But then to think of insisting on having to begin with all things that belong to a position on the first scale, or of the tenth or twentieth magnitude! To think of wanting the appendages that wait on wealth past telling perhaps! and a title in the peerage! Caperwit leaves his betrothed for a lord, saying,

"——— I shall be proud to serve you;
But at this present, with your noble licence,
I take my leave; there is a lord expects

> To meet me at a tavern, that has come
> Fourscore and nineteen mile to hear an elegy of
> My composition."

Which elicits from the girl the rejoinder,

> "He deserves to enjoy you;"

When he continues,

> "I'll attend the ladies when my stars
> Will be more propitious; in the interim,
> Wearing your beautiful figures in my heart,
> I kiss your white hand."

After he is gone out Gerard says,

> "I think the stock of his discourse be wasted,
> And he returns to take up more on's credit,
> Until he break again."

Sometimes there is not even an attempt to disguise the antagonism. "I never liked that young person of my suite," says the fierce Mlle. de Montpensier in her memoirs; in fact, she adds, "je l'ai chassée deux ans après, parce qu'elle s'étoit mariée par amour*." In general, however, when the interests of worldliness are marshalled against affections, the latter too speak out plainly enough; there is no love lost, I promise you, between the parties on such occasions; for the truth is, even though local and ceremonial height were not interposed, minds themselves are not even. Hear, accordingly, how love, love in the old sense, on the tongue of Cowley, describes worldliness, and sets at nought its pretensions:—

> "Discreet! what means this word Discreet?
> A curse on all discretion!
> This barbarous term you will not meet
> In all Love's lexicon.
> Jointure, portion, gold, estate,
> Houses, household stuff, or land
> (The low conveniences of Fate),
> Are Greek no lovers understand.

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* Mém. de Montpensier, ad an. 1648.

Believe me, beauteous one, when love
Enters into a breast,
The two first things it does remove
Are 'world' and 'interest.'"

So much for worldliness in the light of lovers, who are apt to be content when, as the fabulist says,

"Eux seuls ils composoient toute leur république;
Heureux de ne devoir à pas un domestique."

Worldliness leaves love in presence only of kinds and of categories. As a French author says, when a woman within that sphere by the lot of life seeks an individual,—a generous, natural, noble-hearted person whom she can love,—she finds only a section, or, as he says, "des espèces;" roués, or politicians, or Renés, or the vermin of drawing-rooms, or pedants, or mere fashionables, and so on according to the moulds in which all individuality of character has been melted down and smoothed away, the long and short of it, however, being expressed by Macilente in the two lines—

"'Tis folly, by our wisest worldlings proved,
If not to gain by love, to be beloved."

But let us proceed with our general sketch. Balzac, describing the citizens of this third world, has left some delicate and masterly lines for us to copy. "They have," he says, "always very great motives, very potent considerations, very important reasons for not doing their duty; and they defend themselves with reason against reason. To him who asks for justice, they present compliments and civilities. They give roses and violets to those who want bread. After keeping you a year in suspense, if you press them for an answer, they ask you what it is all about, and show plainly that they never had the least intention of hearing you." As for its implacability and vindictiveness, it is hard to estimate the extent of its proficiency. Cervantes, on one occasion, wanting to speak worldly language, which is often unhappily even that of states to each other, says, "This honourable and necessary determination," meaning to be ironical all the time, and express the resolution of some one to

punish, in his passionate hatred, innocent and guilty alike. It is clear that he laughed at worldliness as well as abhorred it.

In regard to religion, again, this wonderful spirit still, as distinct from the religious worldliness, shows itself alternately most rigid and most indifferent. Gibbon accused his "venerable mother" of Oxford of having "continued to unite the opposite extremes of bigotry and indifference;" but where Catholicity is dominant, the bigotry of the world opposed to it assumes a more intelligent form, and becomes almost scientific in its applications. The world then is, as I said, most rigid! Shall I utter a falsehood or tell the truth? as Homer so often demands. But my mind calls on me to say what is most strange,—even so, rigid, ascetic to a degree unknown in the desert, austere, inexorable, scrupulous, saying, with a celebrated profane writer, that men commit sacrilege by conforming to the Christian discipline through want of proper dispositions, while at other times condemning those very dispositions; so here falling in with even Jansenistic views, as if aiming inordinately at spiritual perfection, and resolving to be content with nothing short of its highest ideal in others, "people," as Madame de Maintenon said, "have so exalted an idea of perfection when they do not practise it! They can't then comprehend how it should be necessary so much as to breathe, or how, after toiling all day with pedants, any one should like to have a little chat with a sensible woman." Such is the austerity of worldliness, which, in its blindness to its own demerits, seems, strange to say, to exceed even the old Stoical notions of morality; for Seneca has left these words, which appear rather to fall in with what Christianity at least suggests, if it does not formally teach, namely, that it is better to have to do with a person who has one whole fault, than with another who has all faults together though each in a less degree,—"Melius cum illo ageretur, qui unum vitium integrum haberet, quam cum eo qui leviora quidem, sed omnia*." The worldly severity on this head has left many traces in history as well as in the events that are now passing amidst these invocations to secure what it calls the spiritual interests of the Church. For instance, when the holy Bishop of

* Epist. 85.

Troyes accepted at once, and without grimace, the place offered him by the Duke of Orleans in the Council of Regency, Saint-Simon says, "The world, which requires good men to be always overshooting the mark, wanted him to refuse it." As for ordinary people, in whom it can discover a single hair on the turn, and on whom consequently it supposes that it can make out an irresistible claim, they may expect rather harsh treatment from the religious severity of this amiable character; for, as Montesquieu remarks, "the world tries to throw ridicule on the passions instead of exposing absurdities in their manner, whereas in themselves they are not ridiculous." However, the only thing that it will allow them to do in that case is to make themselves respectable according to its ideas as quickly as they can, that is to be as miserable and to look as old and as ugly as possible, so as to resemble that class of people who get themselves painted for board-rooms, evincing, as an English critic says of the generality of portraits in an annual exhibition at the Academy, "fussiness, suppleness, business habits, with a sense of the value of trifles, and a varnish of unctuousness over a ground of self-importance and love of power." The sole thing that the grave moralists of this class will allow you to do with impunity is to imitate themselves, and to follow that way which they deem suitable to your years,—to make money, to talk politics, to love yourself and all that appertains to yourself thoroughly and grossly, to be fond of good eating and drinking and sitting in a soft easy chair, to fidget and show your importance wherever you go, and, above all, to avoid and look down upon and cry out against whatever they think savours of sentiment. The religious severity of the world plays also a great part in the republic of letters. It has maxims of its own, which have a wide application. Thus it declares that there is "no possibility of reconciling love of nature with Christianity. The Cross," it says, "bars more or less the way to a free view of nature. The great Pan has nothing to do with the God crucified. The contemplative Christian has to practise a distrustful and timid sobriety with regard to nature." But take another example in our own times, found in a work of pure literature, for I am unwilling to allude to the singularly high tone of our daily press, which is not always quite exempt from this ambition as

far as respects sentences of condemnation. When an admirable French writer describes the innocent foolery of the amateurs of Gothic manners in France, and their coquettings with mediæval things, and then in an unjust mood exclaims, "Voilà la réaction religieuse!" he seems to be entering his protest against self-deceit, and requiring religion pure and undefiled; but all the while he deals unjustly with his own country and contemporaries, overlooks facts attesting the existence of what he extols, and betrays the rash severity of the worldly school, so unlike that which by natural instinct it detests even while commending it. Take another example, this time discerned and presented by the same writer for reprobation. "The world," he remarks, "says to women precisely what religion says to them prescribing their duties. The world says all this, and with a merciless Stoical severity too; but if this is all, this is very hard. It is an aggravation of sorrow rather than a consolation; for what is it but saying, you must have all the privations of virtue without its honours; nothing of whatever is most severe, most difficult, most conventional even must be wanting in you; while you will be given to understand that not one of your sacrifices will be counted either in this world or in the next? You will be left after all in discouragement, despair, and, above all, in doubt, undermining you in secret, malady without a name, of which the progress is more rapid in proportion as it is more concealed. Comprehend who will all this rigidity and harshness. The same duties, the same counsels emanate from the principles of religion, only with an excuse ready, a pardon in perspective, and, above all, moreover, with a motive added which explains and ennobles those duties. They have a why, and without this why the theory of duty, as repeated by the world, will always run a risk of having more admirers than followers." Another instance that seems to indicate this severity might, I am afraid, be detected in a recent work of remarkably subtle criticism, in which the author, who is very estimable, and who possibly would take it as an insult if he were said not to belong to the world, objects to Chateaubriand's manner of apology for Christianity as being "un peu mondaine," and to the great work itself as indicating "l'absence totale de gravité." All that might be conceded perhaps; but then he goes on to say that Chris-

tianity admits and admires only one kind of beauty, that which comes from within,—that all antique beauties, and, for that matter, all modern sentiments which are natural, are only pagan graces. Even in the works of St. Augustine, he is of opinion that the professor of rhetoric throws the Christian into the shade; and he concludes that Chateaubriand remained religious rather through honour than a sentiment of truth. Pretty well, I should think, all this in the way of severity. Its premises, as in this passage, are a mistake, and its inferences something that rather looks like defamation, though unquestionably he did not intend it to be so interpreted. A friend of his, however, and a celebrated woman, improves on the worldly criticism in this respect, saying, that Chateaubriand, for calling in to the defence of Christianity the pleasures of mind and the interests of the heart, was neither more nor less than an innovator and a heretic. Nor does this even content her. She maintains that the Institute of the Jesuits, for opening to each person the way which suits his disposition and talents, constitutes "an important modification of Roman orthodoxy, and, in fact, a well-conditioned heresy." Austerity could hardly go farther, I should think.

On the other hand, if people would notice the profound indifference of worldliness in matters of religion, and how it can take the honour and dispense with trifles, and, as Mrs. Ford adds, "consent gaily to go to hell for an eternal moment or so," they have only to observe but half "the lay thoughts in it," or listen to what is echoed every morning when the pass-word of the day is given out in the leading article of the journal. The world, by means of its select organs, has then but one voice, to condemn what York of old, with Shakspeare, would disparage as being "Church-like humours;" so it repeats its diplomatic maxim—above all, no zeal! no Ultramontanism! which latter cry amounts to something like this, no 'credo,' no 'gloria,' no practical belief, no bringing back of mediæval things that belong not to the progress of civilization!—the former or more general cry from such mouths meaning nothing very wise either—no zeal! What! think me capable of it?

> "Moi souris! des méchans vous ont dit ces nouvelles;
> Moi oiseau! vous n'y regardez pas."

No zeal! That is to say in other words, as a French writer remarks, "Imitate us; we were never worth much,—to-day we are good for nothing. Imitate us; we have broken our vows, betrayed hearts, denied our friends, sold our country, slighted the poor. Imitate us; we have lost every thing,—faith, piety, honour, conscience. Imitate us, and let there be no zeal!" Then every worldly fancy is armed with worldly tyranny, and fathers, who gave not minds to children, seek to rule them in despite of truth, though the souls of parents cannot for ever and absolutely rule them, since, as our old dramatic poet says in regard at least to such fancied obligations,

> "When death sets both in their dissolv'd estates
> There is no child nor father; then eternity
> Frees all from any temporal respect."

Such, nevertheless, is the pretension of the worldly indifference. But people have, in fact, only to look around them, and carefully distinguishing toleration from unbelief, to observe what passes, when, on every occasion, one can repeat the words of the soldier in Honoria and Mammon, saying,

> "———— Jews are included,
> And go upon the score of modern Christians."

But out upon this half-faced fellowship! In fine, as if to proclaim its utter indifference, this spirit instigates its votaries, on the plea of worshipping God, to adopt the "wyf of Bathe's" notions and ways:—

> "In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon
> That to the offryng byforn her schulde goon;
> And if ther did, certeyn so wroth was she,
> That she was thenne out of all charité."

It keeps their heart up, not exactly in the sense there required, but high as distinction covets, although their knees be low. It entails on them the obligation of frequenting, with the assiduity of holy ecstatic creatures, such churches, however distant, as happen to be centres of reunion for persons aspiring to be all distinguished, where, as they say, every body goes, not seeming, without such bodies, to care very much for souls; or, perhaps,

if the whole truth were known, somewhat sceptical as to the existence of the latter, beginning with their own. At least, worldliness, when drawing them together in that direction, does not seem in the nineteenth century to inspire them with the sentiment that the old writers refer to when they say in their bold quaint style, "Let them will it or not, princes, emperors, kings, dukes, marquises, barons, nobles, and all who overflow with riches, must necessarily acknowledge themselves to be in regard to God but poor destitute creatures." They are, as St. Augustine says, "God's beggars;" and he adds, too, "in order that God may recognize his mendicants, let them recognize their own; for with what face could they beseech God to hear them if they do not acknowledge their equals?" This is not exactly their way of looking at themselves and at each other; consequently they care but little for consideration of this kind. Upon the whole then, "persons who live to the end and grow old in the world," says Sainte-Beuve, "without giving themselves a little respite by retirement, escape with great difficulty, in spite of all the qualities they may possess, from adopting, sooner or later, a certain severity or a certain indifference." So you perceive that others before us, for one can speak for all our friends, had made the same remark, though really we were not aware of it at the time when we proposed to exemplify our proposition.

Such is a kind of faint general outline to represent the character which we maintain and shall shortly prove, unless I am greatly mistaken, to be antagonistic to the object proposed in these expeditions, whether by land or water, with few or many, on a common holiday with the people, like the statue of Henry IV. on the Pont Neuf, as Saint-Simon says, or on a day of private exemption, with that of Louis XIII. in the Place Royal, with the great world, which then resided in that locality. Others may describe it more in detail, and as Caperwit says, "So waste the bright Minerva's dew to pickle a mushroom;" but this will suffice here; for at a glance, without the use of algebra, one can perceive that it is ill suited for our purposes. Nevertheless, though at the risk of being thought tedious, we must analyze it a little further, just as some will scrutinize your tadpole till fully developed; for we must prevent the possibility

of any error when we make out our catalogue of eligibles, and of those to whom we are to give no vouchers.

In the first place, there is a certain trick easily detected which yields, as it were, a visible mark by which we may know those whose company, on such occasions, is not by any means desirable. Shall pride carry it? Nay. We of the river or of the groves have but two eyes; Argus had a hundred; but, as Brains says, "he must be a cunning Mercury who can pipe our two both asleep, I can tell you." To discover the secret of this trick, which is a sort of sleight-of-hand to put beholders in a maze, we have not to ask the aid of history, and penetrate by means of it into the society which once had its centres in the Hotel de Rambouillet, at Chantilly, and at Liancourt. "Se croire un personnage est fort commun en France." But this is not exclusively as the poet terms it, "le mal François." At all events, to make our scientific observations on it as at present in England, we must visit regions of thought more modern—not exactly poetical or heroic; not remarkable for sensibility, or delicacy of mind and heart, for consideration, or for respect for any thing that is not the object of a very mean and vulgar ambition. In these very select though frigid and disinherited domains of the moral world, we find this particular trick, this poor coarse and easily learned art, of which the presence yields a token whereby to know those whom we are not to take with us on any of our expeditions.

What is this trick,

"Which makes a dandy while it spoils a man?"

Though very cautiously and almost silently instilled into every "well-bred" person in Vanity Fair, who is the card or calendar of gentry, it is something you soon detect and soon get tired of. For we don't want, as the Greeks said, a parrot escaped from its cage, coming with its bright-coloured wing to a thicket, always practising salutations for illustrious Cæsar, neither leaving a forgetfulness of the name upon the river, every other bird catching the note and singing out unbidden 'Cæsar.' The trick we allude to is used in the choice of subjects for conversation—in the tone of the voice, in the movement of the eyelids, in the arrangement of the face, and almost in every act and movement

of the body. With respect to the former, it is "toujours des marquis!" and in regard to the latter, it is "le ton d'un marquis"—that peculiar manner of speaking which may be affected, "pour se distinguer du commun," and it is pleasant not to speak in English when upon this topic. But how can one describe this jargon, these half-tones of the Grimoire, these breathings, this silence? You would think, at first, that it might be your own and other people's common language that was used, but you soon find that it is a radically different idiom. The idea, the thought, the movement, the form of this expression, all, to the uninitiated, is inexplicable. It is all twists and turns, and allusions, and references, with a negligence and a contempt which no human utterance can do justice to. After observing it one can understand how tempted some generous spirits might be to give up what is called all their prospects in life for the pleasure of singing Io! Io! and the rest, not pronouncing even the aspirate to be lower still, just as you catch the popular song from one of the street juveniles. The trick in its rudest form consists also in using indirect round-about ways of letting people know that one is intimate with the very greatest, so, as Fallace says admiringly, "as to be able to tell news of this lord and of that lady," insinuating also that one has large estates, many horses, high connexions; and all this without having the air of importuning people with accounts about one's self, and one's superiorities of every kind, social, material, moral, and intellectual; for, in general, the thing must be in some respects delicately done, even when the form is rawest. Lucio seems to excuse himself on one occasion by appealing to a sense of the wide range allotted to this whole system of artifice, saying, when reminded of his slanders,

"Faith, my lord, I spoke it but according to the trick."

So it is even with the English knight, Sir Politick Would-be, and, of course, always with your Dandiprat, "verba togæ sequens:"

"—— hæc recinunt juvenes dictata senesque."

Their faces are a prognostication of preferment. They have profited under old Madam Hump-a-pump, that "pécore," as the

French call her, whose replies to all young men's demands of advice in regard to matrimonial matters are sure to be after the manner of the old ballad,—

> "The browne girl she has got houses and lands,
> Faire Ellinor she has got none,
> And therefore I charge thee on my blessing
> To bring me the browne girl home."

Well, in such precincts they are now-a-days Lord Thomas's nearly every one of them. How they do look like statesmen! the brow contracted and each look more supercilious than the first, giving as strong indications, perhaps, of the antiquity of their house as did the Baronci family at Florence, of whom the witty youth Michael Scalza said, that they were formed when nature was in her infancy, and before she was perfect at her work, and that the rest of mankind were all created afterwards, the faces of this distinguished family resembling what children make when they first learn to draw, showing that nature was in its first and earliest rudiments when such altitudes were made. The surface even, therefore, is not always over inviting. And what is there at the bottom of the sack all the while? Strange to say, amidst all this outward splendour, or this pretension to familiarity with greatness, as the case may be, it is the fear of derogation. "Consequently there is no great safeguard for any thing desirable," says Balzac, speaking of certain upstarts who were great adepts this way. "Their innocence does not last longer at court than that of the first man in paradise. They began to think that pride belonged to their dignity, that if they were to act as before, their condition would not be changed, and that courtesy on their part to any one would shove them back into the equality from which they had such pain to emerge."

> "Not nature, to whom all evils lay siege, can
> Bear great fortune but by contempt of nature."

'Tis Shakspeare says it; and here, as in these upstarts, when you see the bottom of their success, you would laugh to see to what metal this counterfeit lump of ore will be melted.

These are only a few specimens of the system; but what on

earth can our excursionists, seeking a serene hour, make of people who have had this kind of supernatural education, as Jules Janin wittily calls it? and with whom time, such a treasure for us on the river, falls as a tax on listlessness; having idleness without gaiety, fatigue without work, and repose without being tired—without an idea in their head, a virtue in their heart, or an industry at their fingers' ends. Do I think it desirable for purposes of a day's enjoyment that they should avoid them? I don't wish to be too emphatic in my reply, but I must certainly observe, rather. What could they make, for instance, of one always mounted on the stilts of her reserve and anti-social pride, that will not yield compassion, perhaps, even to a poor woman going to borrow money on her wedding-ring? What of a man similarly influenced, ever wanting to say, "I am joined with no sixpenny rakers—but with nobility and tranquillity, burgomasters and great oneyers?" You might think that the ladder could be drawn up after this one; but wait a moment. A French writer, after giving a fearful picture of the crimes of certain princes, concludes in these words: "Let us not accuse their blood nor their particular actions,—'ils sont tous extrêmement bien nés.'" That observation would not exactly content our comrades while passing an evening on the Thames. What, again, could they make of those false delicates described in the Tatler, amongst whom the rules are to be as contradictory as they can be to nature? They are to eat every thing before it comes in season, and to leave it off as soon as it is good to be eaten. They are not to approve any thing that is agreeable to ordinary palates; and nothing is to gratify their senses but what would offend those of their inferiors. "The chief cause of this malady," as one of the ancients said, "seems to be a distaste for common life, 'vitæ communis fastidium,' causing those who are afflicted with it to seek always to be distinguished from others by dress, by the elegance of dinners, by the splendour of equipages, and even by the use and applications of hours; but the very conversation of all such people," he adds, "is to be dreaded and avoided, for these are they who hand down vices and transmit them to others; and their words do infinite mischief, for they leave seeds in the minds of those who hear them

which rise up later in a plentiful crop of what is evil*." Foscari, in the Grateful Servant, is guilty of the mistake of supposing that greatness and worldliness are inseparable; for he says,

> "Trust not a great man, most of them dissemble;
> Pride and court-cunning hath betray'd their faith
> To a secure idolatry; their soul
> Is lighter than a compliment."

We need no accusations, I repeat it, against a class, but what should be denounced is a disposition. The worldly person may have all those requisites in him that folly and green minds look after; his cares may not exceed those described by the old poet, as besetting that particular class of individuals who have their base town-art to know who's fit to feed them; who have no house, no family, no ties, and therefore mould tales for men's ears to bait that sense.

> "——— cubat hic in colle Quirini,
> Hic extremo in Aventino; visendus uterque;
> Intervalla vides humane commoda;"—

to each lofty palace he may come as humbly as we are used to approach the holy altar; but his humility is another shuffle in the trick; and he will not hear compliments from one of these summer parties of pleasure in the open air, excepting such as are conveyed in the lines of the old play:

> "——— You are a fine gentleman,
> A taffeta—satin—plush—embroidered—
> Laced—scarlet—tissue—cloth-o'-bodkin—devil,
> Pride is thy meat and drink, thy library,
> And thy religion."

If he says coolly, by way of retort, "It seems to me that a person like you ought not to use such language," the best rejoinder would be that made by the witty girl Sophie Arnould to the lieutenant of police, "Yes, sir, but in presence of a man like you, I am not a person like myself."

The frivolous spirit of the world is indeed hardly entitled to

* Sen. Ep. 123.

the name of any thing allied with pride, which has a diabolic grandeur of its own. Frivolity, as Vauvenargues said in his discourse on pleasure, "reduces men actually to nothing. There is," he adds, "perhaps no vice that one ought not to prefer to it, for any thing is better than not to be at all. Nothing is below every thing—this nothing is the greatest of all vices; and let it not be objected that to be frivolous is to be something, for it is to be neither for virtue, nor for glory, nor for reason, nor even for passionate pleasures."

Only fancy, again, having for companion one whose device consists in not appearing pleased heartily with any thing, however delightful to others, like the lieutenant of police at Madrid, in the tale of Cervantes, who, in order to preserve the stateliness of his office, would not stop to hear the end of the romance sung by the beautiful gipsy girl, Preciosa, but after involuntarily enjoying it with the crowd for an instant, recollected himself and passed gravely on. Here the trick produces a resemblance to oriental fatuity, so that a poet, comparing one of its experts, says,

> "Just as a mandarin finds nothing fine,
> At least his manner suffers not to guess
> That any thing he views can greatly please;
> Perhaps we have borrow'd this from the Chinese."

At the best they only merit Beatrice's commendation—"they are neither sad nor sick, nor merry, nor well, but civil, civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion." With persons of this turn of mind, so sharp to smell out what their object demands, and so framed to falsehood that, as Saint-Simon said of some of the Rohans, you may reasonably entertain a doubt as to their feeling thirst when they ask for drink at dinner*,—no one must dare to express admiration for any thing that does not savour of the great world on pain of being treated, perhaps, as if he were one of the shoe-black brigade, or some apprentice or other only fit to wear corduroy. Worldliness involves scepticism as to every thing not alone true, but pleasant, and beautiful, and good. "The person perfectly accomplished in that way is he who is no longer even in doubt," as Jules

* xix. 76.

Janin says, "for doubt is still a belief. To believe nothing and to admire nothing—that's his gospel. Whoever you be," he concludes, "heaven preserve you from being perfectly accomplished in this way!" A great author, in a recent work, contrasts such persons, in regard to their power of resisting fine impressions, with the common people. "As sublime actions," he says, "are often the least understood, there were some in the town who, commenting on the conduct of the good bishop, said, It is affectation. But this was only a saying in drawing-rooms, while common people who cherish no malice against holy actions were moved to admiration." Speaking of such notabilities Saint-Simon, however, ascribes to them a certain kind of admiration, though it does not much mend the matter. "Admirers," he says, "of course they are—admirers of nothings, provided only that these nothings belong to persons in some high place under government, or in favour at court*; but there ends their capacity in that direction." Garrick complained of this in his day, saying,

> "May I approach unto the boxes, pray,
> And there search out a judgment on the play?—
> In vain, alas! I should attempt to find it;
> Fine people see a play, but never mind it.
> 'Tis vulgar to be moved by acted passion,
> Or form opinions till they're fix'd by fashion."

So that on the whole one might say of them, were they ever to promise to speak well of any thing we like, "I would you had but the wit; 'twere better than your dukedoms—good faith, these same sober-blooded superiorities do not love any thing that we project; nor a man cannot make them laugh." If high personages, however, will join us, they must resemble Ariosto's kings, who laugh with all their hearts like common people, and when occasion calls for it weep like such unaffected children of sorrow that they must needs "swallow some of their tears;" they must resemble his heroes who, on the arrival of intelligence that moves them, leap out of bed and write letters before they dress, from natural impatience, thinking nothing of

* Mém. xviii. 55.

their "dignity." Moreover, what care you for that part of the trick, already noticed, which consists in talking ostentatiously, or slily dropping hints about one's own distinctions, and the extent of one's household, as if instead of having only three servants, like Julius Cæsar when he invaded Britain, the correct thing was to have a thousand like Smindyrides the Sybarite? What would Balzac have said of this trick, so unblushingly practised, who will not pardon poor Montaigne for betraying the faintest trace of possessing it? "Is it not mocking people," he exclaims, "for Montaigne to tell the world that he had a page? Notwithstanding all the friendship and esteem that I have for him, I cannot suffer this page of his. It would have been vanity in a captain in a comedy to say that he had one, if he had not one; and if he had, I maintain that he ought not to have had one. It seems to me that a page is a person sufficiently useless and out of place in a house that has 5000 or 6000 livres per annum. A gentleman of Beausse, who had not a larger income, would never have burdened himself with such an officer. So that if Montaigne had wanted, like Homer, to conceal his country, I should have discovered him by this mark of Perigord. I conclude that Montaigne in this instance committed two faults; the first, in having had a page; the second, greater still, in having it printed that he had one." But perhaps this trick would not seem so great a fault in our times, when not alone—

"Tout marquis veut avoir des pages *;"

but every apothecary must have his henchman, and every ennobled lawyer "his groom of the chambers." Well, let this pass; heaven help us all! But the trick has yet more offensive consequences.

"Equality is the life of conversation. To make society happy and polite, there must nothing be started which shall discover that our thoughts run upon distinctions of rank." This is what an elegant writer in the Tatler says. Oh! it is after some experience, where different ideas reign, that you are likely to join heart and soul in singing,

* La Fontaine.

"Who shall be fairest,
Who shall be rarest?
Who shall be first in the songs that we sing?
She who is kindest
When fortune is blindest,
Bearing through winter the blooms of the spring
Charm of our gladness,
Friend of our sadness,
Angel of life when our pleasures take wing,
She shall be fairest,
She shall be rarest,
She shall be first in the songs that we sing,
Aye, she shall be first in the song that we sing."

But it is not so in the Vanity Fair from which some of us perhaps have to escape when going out for the day. There, if they do not pass by some as misers do by beggars, neither giving to them good word, nor look, they will perhaps be insinuating with their eyes unto them that they should depart and leave them; being ashamed of them, in short. There each tries and often awkwardly enough, to be an adept in what the French call "la politesse proportionnée." There, one who describes it well says, "to watch the behaviour of a fine lady to other and humbler persons is a very good sport for a philosophical observer." On the river or on its banks, to suit company like ours, composed of any thing but philosophers, it would be no sport at all. This is an old accomplishment, however, and in proof I will mention a ridiculous adventure which I heard related by the late Anglican Bishop of ——, containing a curious instance in which in early life he was the observer and the victim. Being of good family, he had an introduction to the prime minister on visiting France in the reign of Louis XV. Choiseul, rather to the astonishment of the young man's friends in that capital, who knew the general fate of introductions to that haughty minister, invited him to dinner. Finding himself a stranger to every one among the guests, he endeavoured to enter into conversation with those who sat next him, but a forbidding and contemptuous silence was all the result that he obtained from either side.—After the banquet the minister came up to him, asked him respecting his intended tour, and

promised him letters to the cities through which he was to pass. This short and complimentary recognition being over, the guests who had before shrunk from him as if fearful of contagion, pressed round him, overwhelming him with inquiries and civilities, which he received, he assured me, with a perfect consciousness of what they were worth. But this was no scene either in its beginning or its end which would suit such intervals as we are aspiring to enjoy. If we had, all of us, the ready wit that Foote possessed, there might, indeed, be a certain pleasure in finding ourselves among such people. Foote, as I once heard the late celebrated William Spenser mention, when he went, for the first time, to the club in St. James's-street, of which he had just been elected member, found that no one present would either speak to him or sit near him. A good-natured country gentleman, observing what passed, felt a sort of pity, and not knowing very well what else to begin with, said, "Mr. Foote, you will lose your handkerchief." "Thank you, sir," replied the actor, in a loud voice, thrusting it deeper into his pocket, "you know the present company better than I do." Though no doubt at present the spirit of worldliness will assume a less openly revolting form, still there is no improbability in supposing that wherever its elements exist some not very agreeable manifestation of its presence can be discoverable. In fact, I have myself witnessed them in London, such as you might have thought discoverable only in the pages of Molière, and capable of making you almost burst your sides with laughing at them later.

What a charming provision for serenity and joy, then, is yours, if you are to have persons with you, in the least degree like those guests who will keep cringing to some of the company and looking cold on others, or quenching their familiar smile with an austere regard of control, perhaps, hardly deigning to answer them, and acting towards them generally like the old Roman grandee, who used to keep even inferior wine and dishes for the least distinguished of his company! Pliny, blind heathen as the poor man was, could not endure the thought of such a party. "When I make an invitation," he says, like a Christian and a gentleman of sixteen quarterings, "it is to entertain, not to distinguish, my company. I set every man on a level with

myself, not excepting even my freedmen, whom I look upon at those times to be my guests as much as any of the rest." One need hardly add that this is the spirit essential to our expeditions. As Winfield says,

> "Nay, I'll no whispering; what I say to one
> Will concern every man."

Cardan, when summing up his own praises, says of himself, "nec contemptor pauperum, nec oblitus veterum amicorum*." Neither of these qualities, in the circles we are alluding to, would answer now. The second at least would be thought to indicate manners of a fossil world. The art that we are obliged to describe consists in the trick of cleverly getting rid of friends without any scene; of ceasing, as if unwillingly, to see them or correspond with them; of letting them pass quietly to the grave, as far as old acquaintanceships are concerned, unknown and forgotten: the fact being, all the while, that those who practise it, and in general people of the world, as they are called, have not soul enough to value a noble friendship. No doubt, as Madame Swetchine said to the Countess Edling, "friendship is not solely founded on chronology; and the order of dates is not essential for its observance†;" but then only to think of being all but pretty plainly told by an old friend that he does not much care to see you any more while you are visible by daylight, though, of course, if you resolve later, and have power to penetrate to him at the midnight hour as a ghost, he cannot help it. Your ascetic Christian, of course, may be pleased at such experience; but as for "the like of us," I think the mere thought of such obduracy and oblivion in any one to whom we once gave our right hand is disagreeable, and sufficient to disturb an hour that would have been otherwise serene enough. It is an old complaint, however, and Martial, after uttering it on his own account, adopted perhaps the wisest remedy, saying, "Since your return, Lord Afer, I have called five times at your gate without being able to say good morning to you. Your servant said that you were not up, or that you were engaged. Ah, well! I see

* Cap. 14. † Lettres, i. 9.

how it is; you don't care for my good morning. Be it so, I say good evening then, and wish you adieu"—

"Jam satis est; non vis, Afer, avere: vale *."

The truth is, the result of associating with spirits of this quirk is almost always sure to be, sooner or later, disappointment and a temptation to feel resentment, arising from the thought of early ties outraged and forgotten. It seems rather too much to expect that one's companions should all have hides as dull as a rhinoceros, and feel serene when subjected to the kind of ordeals that worldly people will often provide for the ingenuous. The general result is wittily described by an old writer who was not in the least a democrat. "You see," he says, "in one a settled melancholy, in another a bridled rage; a third has lost his memory, and a fourth his humour. In a word, when you see a particular cast of mind which looks a little upon the distracted, you may be sure the poor gentleman has formerly had great friends. For this reason I have thought it a prudent thing to take a nephew of mine out of a lady's service, and have bound him apprentice to a carpenter."

Balzac, as a true friend of serene hours, could never relish the trick in any of its shifts, or endure those who acquired it. This writer had every thing to favour him at the outset of life, he says of himself, and yet he never gained a step in advancement. The truth is he always avoided it, and he only seemed to seek it in order not to disobey the paternal power; so that he was ambitious, not with his own ambition, but with that of his father. At the present day his father and he are of the same opinion. The good man in his old age has been cured of the world, and his son shows clearly enough that he never was sick of that kind of malady.

Nevertheless, in modern times, when the art of enjoying social meetings out of doors, or within them, by the absence of art, seems almost a thing in some circles forgotten or unattainable, we ought not to lay too much stress upon the evil of this kind of legerdemain, however tiresome and insipid it may be. Unfortunately it is only the embryo, as it were, of the animal, the

* Lib. ix. 8.

forerunner or symptom of something that becomes much blacker and more complicated within and without, and in far more decided antagonism to the object which we have in view. We must proceed, therefore, to suggest that the expanded qualities themselves of which it is symptomatic, as the outward and initial case, disqualify utterly those who possess them from being suitable companions when it is a question of realizing a serene hour. It would be nothing else, as some one says, but the meeting of two different organizations, each incompatible with the play of the other.

In the first place, it is quite clear that when you want to enjoy yourself, a proud man, merely as such, ought to be saluted respectfully from a distance, as you pass on and leave him to preside in that mansion which is no doubt as calm, as cold, and as correct, as the house of a usurer, but which is infected with an evil of its own; for, to use the words of St. Augustine, as every grain, every fruit, every kind of wood has its worm, and the worm of the apple is different from that of the pine, and that of the plank from that of the wheat, so the worm of riches is pride*.

"Maxima quæque domus servis est plena superbis,"

says Juvenal, meaning those of whom it is recorded that the taunts of one of them caused St. Peter to deny Christ. But abroad on the river, or in the meadow, it will be nearly as bad, as far, at least, as relates to the habits generated by the constant need of such assistance, though you may see verified there the proverb, "Fly pride, says the peacock," and hear a Lady Selina say of some one absent, "Worldly, oh very! I don't like worldly people." Weigh him well, you will be told, and that which looks like pride is modesty. There are many such modest people in the great houses of England. The fact is, pride has no other glass to show itself but pride; you are more tempted to say, "There's a knight with lordships but no manors," a selfish being engulfed in the ancient depths of vanity and pride. What is very disagreeable, too, is the fact forcing itself on every one's notice of this abominable and stupid spirit,

* In 1 Tim. 6, Serm. 24.

clothed with technicalities, becoming each day more and more prevalent, as a disposition commendable and allied to the solid principles of human society, a thing to be tasted of, and by degrees adopted for sole nourishment.

> "Reviled and loved, renounced and follow'd,
> Now bit by bit the world is swallow'd."

"The world is too much with us, early and late," says Hazlitt, "and the fine dream of our youth is best prolonged among the visionary objects of antiquity*," or, as we should say, rather, among the real lads and lasses that we consort with on the river. Elsewhere and off it, who would even dare in play to pretend to have it otherwise? Who would venture to talk, before such formalities, like the President de Brosses, of "mon fidèle valet le Seigneur Pernet?" or like young Hadit in the old play, saying, "I have some acquaintance with apprentices and plasterers?" A witty author of the day, indeed, has "the young gentlemen attached to the stable department;" but such playfulness, if ever so safe, would be misconstrued and disliked, as is every thing but what is proud, exclusive, and, as we on the river say, stuck up; and poor Maria, merry as she is, can tell us that, since her type of such grandeur is one who, unlike Olivia, that would not have a domestic miscarry for the half of her dowry, must show herself "surly to servants." Cast his humble slough—truly he will without counsel! and that before all of us.

> "Ciel! faut-il qu'aujourd'hui fâcheuses et fâcheux
> Conspirent à troubler les plus chers de nos vœux?"

They don't trouble us a bit, though we cite the lines; for there is an easy remedy, and that consists simply in flying to sanctuary in our holiday sense of the term, as we suggested in our first trial-trip, that is, in changing the air when winds of this kind blow, and in taking ourselves off, while singing,

> "He was a wight of high renown,
> And thou art but of low degree;
> 'Tis pride that pulls the country down,
> Then take thine auld cloak about thee."

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* Round Table.

The specific is, in fact, the readiest thing imaginable. All that you have to do is to accept the invitation of Marble Hill in the pastoral dialogue of Swift.

> "Here you can come and take a nap
> In summer on my verdant lap;
> Prefer our villas, where the Thames is,
> To Kensington or hot St. James's;"

understanding of course at the same time that you are to take with you to the former some one who is not always occupied about himself, and, like the Duc de Noailles, "never forgetting any thing of the ceremonies and distinctions which can flatter him," as Saint-Simon expresses it. The thing is to get for comrade some one like Pliny, without his paganism, who, writing to Tacitus, after describing the death of his uncle, adds, "During all this time my mother and I, who were at Misenum——But as this has no connexion with your history I will put an end to my letter"—conclusion that may remind one of Portia's way of breaking off—"This comes too near the praising of myself; therefore, no more of it: hear other things."

Again, it is evident that persons, however amiable in other respects, who are always secretly aspiring, as we have observed, to distinction, let them be ever such little adepts in the trick of manifesting it, must be got rid of with all possible politeness. When the author of a celebrated French tale of perversity wants his hero, from being an innocent youth, to turn out an accomplished villain, he gives him for sole vice ambition in this sense; ambition generally being of such a quality that when it once takes possession of a man's heart and soul the man is lost, it being of all bad passions the most durable, more durable even than avarice; while, as the Duc de Saint-Simon seems to think, it is the mainspring of that rare perversity which causes such blackness in the soul as to make a man doubt of its existence and believe in nothing. Sheridan was of the same opinion. He said that it was the chief of all the passions, and that it led to greater crimes than any other; as, in fact, some of those persons to whom his remarks were applicable might have been thought, at least for a time, instances to verify what he said. Accordingly, the fabulist I spoke of gives his hero of the cross-

road for leading passion the desire to be distinguished in the first circles, to reach the highest step of the ladder that leads to fortune and honours; he makes even his pleasures enter into his plan of ambition; he makes his love ambition, or rather, he represents him wishing and realizing every thing but love. The story proceeds through episodes horrible and un-English enough, but all that is wanting for our purpose is to observe how incompatible must be such a disposition with the enjoyment of a serene hour.

We demur, therefore, to having any thing to do with people who, in this way, want to be distinguished,

"Et comme du fumier regardaient tout le monde."

They will have no invitations to our Marly; their turn will never come, for they are not on our list. In fact, such distinction is subversive of our whole ideal, and its consequences would be deemed ruinous to any well-grounded hope of enjoying a serene hour, so that each of us on these occasions would say with Antipholus of Syracuse,

"If every one know us, and we know none,
'Tis time, I think, to trudge, pack, and begone."

As for the passion itself,—fed by a sign of dignity, a breath, a bubble,—it is, of course, no novelty in the world; but formerly the word 'distinguished' was never employed thus absolutely to imply any thing desirable; unless indeed we interpret as an instance of its use in such a sense, the singular epithet applied to Petrarch by the German emperor, in that letter so ridiculous for its inflated style, from beginning to end, in which he says, "If your distinction would know with what ardour the imperial serenity desires your presence." As far as relates to the common language of mortals, this use of the term, invented in the eighteenth century, became current only in our own times. In the seventeenth century it signified a very ambiguous kind of advantage. Thus, in order to console Ninon de l'Enclos in her old age, she used to be told that she was a woman of "distinguished merit." "I have read your letter to him," she writes to Saint-Evremond, "by the aid of my spectacles, which do not fit me well. If he likes the kind of merit which is called here

'distinguished,' your wish will be accomplished; for it is with this fine word that people try to console me for the loss of my youth and every thing else *." At present, however, there is reason to believe that some few even of our fair ones, in the full bloom of beauty, have no sweeter hope than to be distinguished solely in regard to social eminence, to obtain which they would, like the young lady that a celebrated Frenchman speaks of, marry a poor old cross grumbler, solely to bear a name like that of Malatesta, which simply signified bad disposition, that they would even give up beauty and wear spectacles, or any ugly thing else that could be used to denote it—so little likely are they to be overheard saying to any one what fair Ellen in the old ballad utters,

> "And I had rather have one twinkling,
> Child Watere, of thine ee,
> Than I wolde have Cheshire and Lancashire both
> To take them mine owne to bee."

But for all that, in the haunts of our excursionists your stately airs won't do, any more than in France. No, without being mad like poor Ophelia, we shall dismiss them, in some such words as hers, saying, "Come, your coach! Good night, ladies; good night, great ladies; good night, good night."

I do not deny that we of this oar-loving nation are flattered by distinction of a certain kind. I well remember the pleasure that one of them felt on hearing a common fellow say to another as he passed them, "That's one of the chaps as rows in the Trinity boat;" for while he had the honour of pulling number 7, and even sometimes stroke, in it, that swift eight-oar was never known to have been beaten at a race; and many a hard contest it had to sustain in consequence, the details of which would be here irrelevant, however he might like to indulge in them. But for distinction in the sense of the world at present, why, look you, they do not, at least in their serene hours, value it a snap; though really, as Tranio says of a nutshell, to say what that expression, "worth a snap," means, I don't know exactly. "O how rare it is," exclaims Richard of St. Victor, "to find a man

* Sainte-Beuve, Causeries du Lundi, tom. iv.

who does not think himself to be something when he is nothing! who does not think himself great, and very great, and more than golden, when he is only dust and ashes! He who swells thus must learn to reduce himself in his own estimation, and to view himself as he really is, and come to the conclusions of Job, who was himself one of the greatest of the orientals*." But again and again, one feels impelled to ask, what enjoyment can you have with a person ready to give up any thing for social distinction?—"ne sit præstantior alter?" and who, to mend the matter, perhaps is ever, like Tasso, making every morning his old discovery, that do what one will he is not sufficiently cared for; that the prince has no leisure to attend to him; that the nobility do not "yield him the first place," or, as he added, that they will not allow him to be treated "externally as their equal." The short and the long of it is, that with such a wight, however much or little genius he may possess, you can never have a serene hour; and when he takes leave of us we may truly say to him, in the words of Hamlet, "You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal." For what we like is something, as the old poet says, "sweet to delight the mind, without the fear of cost, though with but fleeting words uttered through the mouth;" whereas its very cheapness will render it unfit for him and inaccessible. "It is in my mind," says Cowley, "a very delightful pastime for two good and agreeable friends to travel up and down together, in places where they are by nobody known, nor know any body." It was the case of Æneas and his Achates when they walked invisibly about the fields and streets of Carthage; Venus herself

> "A vail of thick'ned air around them cast,
> That none might know or see them as they passed."

At all events, on these occasions, though we have not exactly the receipt of fern-seed to render us invisible as we walk, we can contrive in general so as not to be stared at. In fact, somehow on these occasions, as Littlewit says in the old play, "we'll be humble enough, we'll seek out the homeliest place, that's certain; rather than fail we'll eat our provisions on the ground."

* De Eruditione Hominis interioris, c. 21.

This, of course, is no salve for his conscience. At all events, going forth thus to spend a serene day, for us there is no use of noise, and we can march without a drum; but that will not be sufficient to tranquillize him. Are you at defiance, he will ask, with reputation and the dignity due to your father's house and you? Do what you will to please him, he will be all the time on the rack, thinking whether his companions are distinguished enough, saying with Armado, "dear boy, let them be men of good repute and carriage," whether the place is respectable enough, the thing you put him to do delicate enough. He finds your Eden too vulgar, and exclaims,

"A fine occupation,
For one in my station!
A hole where a rabbit
Would scorn to inhabit,
Dug out in an hour,
He calls it a bow'r."

Thus the Comte de Caylus is dreadfully scandalized by Guillaume de Machant, poet and musician of the fourteenth century, for having represented a certain couple of friends, in fact one of his own heroes and heroines, as dining in a little way-side tavern at La Chapelle, just outside of Paris, and he says that such an act, aggravated by their playing at bowls afterwards, proves that people were accustomed in those ages to simple ways, which in his time would be "very derogatory and even highly improper*." Such a party, however, in spite of his stately airs, would prove by no means a myth, even upon the Thames at the present day. Grumble and declaim of course such a person (for I hardly know what to call him) will. In vain we remind him that—

"Une tête empanachée
N'est pas petit embarras.
Le trop superbe équipage
Peut souvent en un passage
Causer du rétardement,
Les petits en toute affaire
Esquivent fort aisément;
Les grands ne le peuvent faire."

* Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscript. tom. 34, p. 172.

All which in English means, that I had rather not be gazed at as more noble, while forced to go up and down like a cock that nobody can match. In vain we exclaim, in Spenser's noble lines,

> "No service loathsome to a gentle kind.
> Entire affection scorneth nicer hands.
> True love loathes disdainful nicety."

He will be still thinking about whether the amusement is sufficiently refined; like Anaxarchus, perhaps, and that too without being nervous, whether any common person's hands have touched what he is to use, or whether any one has breathed on what he is to eat; whether there is derogation in what he has to do; whether there is danger of being seen, or misconstrued, or unobserved, for his fears even are all in contradiction with each other. How vice in these circles resists vice! As Richard of St. Victor says, "Thus pride opposes sensuality, and pleasure is renounced for the sake of indulging in pride: 'ut mens elata habeat unde glorietur*.'" In fact, even in regard to pleasure and amusement, if such people can be said to have any, their trick is called into play. For what they want in that respect is not sunshine after rain, not what is natural, sweet, and attractive, yielding a common enjoyment; it is, on the contrary, something that often brings along with it inconvenience and all imaginable consequences excepting serenity. To do the correct thing in regard to recreation keeps them continually on the stretch for news, in order to know what that thing is at any particular time; and moreover, that notable ambition keeps them, if not on the rack, at least not on a bed of down, to gratify it; for the precise moment and the precise way must be chosen. They must be able to say, when any thing wonderful is talked of, that they were there on that very occasion, and actually in company with the very persons that it happens to be the fashion to make much of. No simple juvenile project about spending a serene hour in a quiet, homely way, on the river or the heath, would suit their views; so there is no use in proposing it to them. And it is the same with regard to every thing else. Swift's notion of the use even of learning and ability was

* De Statu interioris Hominis, i. 18.

this, "The reputation of wit and great learning does the office of a blue ribbon or a coach and six." You will have a pleasanter day, depend upon it, with some one who attends to the maxim, "Noli quærere a rege cathedram honoris*," and who can repeat from his heart the lines of Johnson in the ode to Spring—

"Teach me, thou smiling, peaceful bower,
Cool meditation's quiet seat,
The gen'rous scorn of venal power,
The silent grandeur of retreat."

That merrier, happier day will have to be passed with some one resembling the Duc de Saint-Simon, in the mood he was in when shown by a Clermont-Tonnerre through his house, filled with his scutcheons and genealogical titles from the boards to the ceilings; for "having shown me all these wonders," said the duke slily, "which I admired in haste, in rather a different sense from his, I pursued my journey." You will be all the more serene for having at your elbow one who can say with Rosencrantz, "Truly, I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality, that it is but a shadow's shadow."

Besides, we must not forget the sort of mind needing affectation, which in most persons accompanies all this craving for eminence, utterly disqualifying them for any thing like general intercourse with the companions we are supposing. These lisping hawthorn-buds, that come like women in men's apparel, and that, above all things, will be "singled from the barbarous," have all more or less a family likeness to Holofernes; their humour is lofty; they are too picked, too spruce, too affected, too odd, too peregrinate, as I may call it, to use the words of that representative man. Their style is ever the same, "a noble gentleman," as Armado says, "and of course my familiar—but let it pass." And all the while "it is for what they want in naturale," as the old dramatist remarks, "that their fortunes have made up in honours, since they'll be so saucy as to think they can be impotent in wisdom." If, in opposition to what every sensible sprightly girl advises, you run after them, you will have an opportunity of studying from life the sort of

* Eccles. vii. 4.

group that Jules Janin met even under the lime-trees, "little or no movement, but physiognomies full of investigation and continual half-smiles of a sinister cast, that comprehended each other in crossing." Perhaps, poor piece of common mortality! you could not enter their presence more respectfully unless you approached on your knees as when you visit the burning chapel on Good Friday; but, for all that, what you get in return will be something more than the little Christian box on the ear that you received from the bishop at your confirmation; for, to do them justice, though they desire to kiss heaven with their titles, yet they will count them fools that give them too humbly. But who, I should like to know, will feel inclined to pity you? If you take one of them with you, the race of good fellows will only laugh at your expense, when inwardly if not audibly your friend will be saying, like Autolycus, "I am a courtier. See'st thou not the air of the court in these enfoldings? Hath not my gait in it the measure of the court? Reflect I not on thy baseness court contempt?" One of them, however, might answer his speech or his looks in the words of an old play,

> "——— Thou art the town top;
> A boy will set thee up, and make thee spin
> Home with an eel-skin."

And then what assistance in a boat, in moments of great emergency, for our "serene hours" are often full of them, or what accordance on shore, can you expect from one "perfumed like a milliner," glittering with rings, and, as the Greeks would say, barbarian finery; who can only wear such shirts as Sir Epicure Mammon prefers, "soft and light as cobwebs," and all whose other raiment is such "as might provoke the Persian, were he to teach the world riot anew?" Of course, such things are of use to trade, at least one may suppose for a moment that their luxurious prodigality can favour it; but as for you who have no stock on board for sale, and who owe no social aggrandizement to cotton, silk, or velvet perhaps through more generations than you can think of counting, I believe you will be provoked to mutter something like—

> "Avoid i' your satin doublet, Numps."

Fair weather after you! What should we have done with him for working days? As Beatrice says, "his grace is too costly to wear every day." No, the friend for us is one whose clothes shall never be the best things about him; he must have somewhat beside, either of human letters, or severe honesty, that will speak him a man though he went naked. The best you can hope for is to have company of this kind resembling the person described in the old play,

> "Careless he is with artful care,
> Affecting to be unaffected."

And all the while

> "——————— so miserably
> Forfeit to pride and fashion, that if heaven
> Were a new dress they'd not stay in't a fortnight."

Yes, literally, just so. Was it not worldliness, pray, in former times of Cecil and his peers, that required a new dress for religion herself? and you, who are sworn vassals to it, would make us all change with it! Aye, as the five ladies say in answer to the beau with our witty poet,

> "You would, you thing of things!"

The race, though exclusive in its desires, is so numerous that when confronted with it one may be excused for bringing to bear upon its battalions to flutter them such heavy artillery as Richard of St. Victor brings up in these words: "To retain one's own with avarice, to make private and personal what the Author of all wished to be common to all, to be unwilling to do to others what we wish others to do to us, is not at all just; but it is against equity, and altogether wickedness. In these manners, therefore," he continues, "which seem so frivolous, vanity is to be despised, injustice hated, malignity with impiety condemned and execrated." Then, penetrating below the surface, he touches on the thoughts of worldliness in general, saying, after citing the words, "'Non sedi cum concilio vanitatis,' it must be confessed that there come into my mind often innumerable thoughts, and that many affections rise up and solicit me respecting bodily cares and cases of necessity. They assemble

as if for consultation, but in reality it is for deception, and so are congregated many counsellors and vain counsellors, or, rather, true deceivers; they meet as in one council, and as if for giving good counsel, and they give in common many counsels, but they are useless and vain, for it is a privy council of vanity, and all their counsel corresponds to it*."

Again, returning to a monstrous feature already involuntarily noticed as so prominent that it is seen at a side glance, who would like to have for companion, even on a party of pleasure, that nice sort of fellow who would be sure to ignore or forget him the next year if he found it convenient to do so? Well, this is the world's soul, and just of the same piece is his spirit. O momentary grace of mortal men, which we more hunt for than the grace of God! Well might poor Hastings say it.

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever."

Aye, but he who saw it with you won't think so, or at least won't, through no fault of yours, think you to be part of the thing. Oh, the arrantest crocodile that ever Christian was acquainted with! No doubt you spent months together in roaming over Alps, or viewing the enchanted scenes of fair Italia, as you were sure to call it then, where you thought "the bands of friendship are woven by the hands of the Graces;" but "pride and ill memory go together." Your companion and friend, if of a worldly turn of mind, may possibly have a very short memory in your regard, just as I believe we are apt to fade in a few minutes from the mind of a way-side landlady, distracted by a number of importunate guests on a fine holiday, when she has supplied us, thirsty from a Thames wherry, with a glass of beer, and sent us after her child of the bottles into the garden, to which she promises, with all sorts of vows, to send our tea immediately, that in the end cometh not. Perhaps there was a time when they knew there was such a person as you; they think that they have seen you somewhere, in a confused way, they cannot say exactly where. "But to the many among men," as Ajax says, "the haven of fellowship is faithless." So now, though

* In Ps. xxv.

for a different reason from Panurge's, you are their "former crony;" it's all over with your good fellowship. The fact is, like Malvolio, they will be proud, they will read politic authors, they will wash off gross acquaintance; at all events, if you are no longer in the sun of the world's favour, they will think no more of you. As our poet says,

> "———— One cloud of winter showers
> These flies are couch'd."

As for keeping up friendship with one's father's friends in the style of the Duc de Saint-Simon, who invited them to his own wedding, and published in his memoirs that he "cultivated them all with great care as long as they lived," that sort of thing, of course, is not to be thought of now-a-days; though if one had not studied this third world well, one might have thought that pride itself in Belgravia would like to accept the old notions of nobility respecting family connexions and the duty of the chief to befriend those who looked up to him, who were of his own house and boasting of a common ancestor—as when Mme. de Maintenon, in the height of her grandeur, writes to a poor relation, saying, "As for what you are pleased to call my protection, you know that there is no D'Aubigné to whom I have not granted it, and that I have even sometimes given it to the mere name, 'et que quelquefois même je l'ai donnée au seul nom.'" But even here at present worldliness gets nervous at the shadow of a virtue; it dreads an anachronism in regard to what is noble. Forgetful or void, through sheer ignorance, of all feudal associations, which are in one respect patriarchal, those who are now swayed by it know how to practise the directions given to Malvolio to "be opposite with a kinsman," whom still in the gentle condition of blood they should so know, while the courtesy of nations allows them his superiors. Indeed, generally, "in the booths of Vanity Fair, people," we are told, "seldom miss each other." It is not there they can sing with any truth,

> "Oh, Willy, we have missed you!"

They never have seen that Willy any where. "You were right,

my mother," writes a young soldier, not in the least a Jacobin any more than his correspondent, who was a great Legitimist and Royalist; "there is more cordiality in people of low rank than in the great." "The mere man of the world," says Hazlitt, "becomes more dissatisfied and fastidious, and more a misanthrope the longer he lives." In that fair many may wear the willow as the symbol of being forsaken. "In that fair," says the author who describes it, "there are no better satires than letters. Take a bundle of your dear friend's of ten years back,—your dear friend who hates or forgets you now. There ought," he adds, "to be a law in the fair ordering the destruction of every written document after a certain brief and proper interval. At all events, the best ink for its use would be one that faded utterly in a couple of years, and left the paper clean and blank, so that you might write on it to somebody else*." Well, persons formed for companions on such expeditions as ours, are not of that feather, as Timon says, "to shake off their friend when he most needs them," and that is often when he seeks a serene hour, thinking of past scenes with the companions of his youth.

Then, again, however some may wonder at it, and without at all stretching our tether to take in more than belongs to us, in the mere fact of its being generally base, we detect in the world's mass of vanity a disqualification; for, as Francesco de Mornes says at the end of the 151st chapter of the Palmerin of England, "this unfortunately is the nature of rank, that it maketh those who aspire to it forget all other things." "This lady of the palace," says the Duc de Saint-Simon, "was made for the place she occupied; there was in her the spirit of the world by dint of belonging to it,—little or no other spirit; and she possessed all the baseness necessary to enable one to be in every thing, and that in any way†." "Moral courage in worldly circles," says Mme. E. de Girardin, "is a mistake, a fatal virtue. A man who has shown such courage is a lost man, a very paria, from whom every one flies as fearing contagion. In the world it would be better to be suspected of having the leprosy than a great moral courage. A man so endowed finds no one there to

* Thackeray. † Tom. i.

help him or defend him. He finds only some women, little known in its circle, to admire and to love him." Worldliness when widely disseminated, being limited for many as to its means, has a tendency to bring about the state of things that Jules Janin complains of, saying, "We have made every thing little in our times. A man buries himself in a space of six feet square which he calls his house; this space, already small enough, he makes still smaller by pictures, by statues after the antique, by curtains over the doors; he smothers himself under the luxury and the productions of art in order to find whenever he turns his head a new distraction and a fresh distinction. Besieged in this way, what possibility has he for entertaining a vast noble thought or a salutary fear, such as might visit him where there was room for the imagination, echoes for the heart, and where silence itself has its silence and its lesson?" But it would be well to enter one of the schools of worldliness, in order to mark the kind of instruction that is ever directly given. Its black boards, as it were, contain singular inscriptions. A witty French author exhibits one of them, bidding us remember

to desire believe affirm and, in fine, do	all that	pleases you, agrees with you, serves you, enriches you,

which gives him occasion to remark that synoptical tables of this kind are very useful to the morality of a young man. "The subjects thus turned out on the world," as Rivarol said of Mirabeau, "are capable of doing any thing for money, even a good action." One masterpiece of proficiency there is, the art of doing mean shabby things to people who cannot further our projects; and then, when these latter keep aloof through a sense of the indignity, the being able to turn the laugh against them, as if it was through eccentricity that they did not frequent the society of such noble friends. Worldliness would feel too happy if it were left to think that, for keeping to the devil and all his works, and, as some one adds, "all that sort of thing," it had only God to settle with. It must be undeceived, and reminded that it has also some small account with youth, and with those who seek serene hours. Youth from childhood has an account

against it, having reason to look somewhat black on it, first, for its open and declared opposition, as in the song of Julia,

"We must not play together,
Tom Smith, I'm very sure;
For my papa is very rich,
And yours is very poor."

But, secondly, what is far worse, for some differences it is to be feared may be unavoidably required for the comfort of all parties, youth has reason to loathe worldliness for its underhand influence, tainting, and corrupting, and drying up altogether the sources of the enchantment of early life. It is a kind of horrible nightmare when worldliness, that goblin damn'd, first manifests its presence to a child of generous heart and noble imagination. Indeed, the phantom of the sleep is nothing to it. No bitterness, perhaps, conceivable by the human mind like that! It is another departure from paradise. Yesterday the generous child believed in generosity; high-minded, it believed in magnanimity; heroic, in heroism; loving, friendly, honourable, it had faith in love, friendship, honour, and in every thing fair and good. But the companion of that child has been subjected to the process and manipulations of the monster. That spirit with its foul breath has in an instant dimmed all this brightness. Generosity turns out calculation; magnanimity, falsehood; honour, pretence; friendship, acquaintance; love, a word signifying nothing.

"O, thou dissembling cub! what wilt thou be
When time hath sow'd a grizzle on thy case?"

Out on thee! thou earth! thou detestable exhalation, worldliness! Any thing, oh, let us have any thing, come in what shape it will, rather than thee, making day and night hideous, and us the victims of thy blast!

Of course there are magicians who can call us into certain circles, and persuade us that we see all this with a distorted vision; but the confines hold no one very long with hopes. The reality breaks out, and then, if grace comes in the end with light, we hear words like those of Buckingham,

"——————— You that hear me,
This from a dying man receive as certain:
Where you are liberal of your loves and counsels,
Be sure you be not loose; for those you make friends,
And give your hearts to, when they once perceive
The least rub in your fortunes, fall away
Like water from ye, never found again
But when they mean to sink ye."

Indeed, without having to wait for such tardy confessions, sometimes even the votaries of the ugly fiend that reigns over this third world, when they hear its discipline extolled, will say with the sinister chieftain who has listened to Timon, "he has almost charmed me from my profession by persuading me to it." Worldliness is not found sweet on the palate even by those who are accustomed to drink it every day. Speaking of a great noble and celebrated statesman who had just died, on whom the newspapers of every political shade were pronouncing a pompous eulogium, "They may write what they like," said to me a woman, who, by the way, was connected with him by marriage, "but, for my part," she added, laughing, "I always thought him a worldly and disagreeable old man."

We object to worldliness, again, because it makes men vulgar, not in the old women's sense of the term, but according to its legitimate meaning, as distinguished by Shelley when remarking that "the vulgarity of rank and fashion is as gross, in its way, as that of poverty, and its cant term equally expressive of bare conceptions, and therefore equally unfit for poetry*." In fact, in any relation, what can you make of a fellow so utterly nothing as he knows not what he would be? "You talk of what is basely vulgar," says Madame de Lambert, adding, "la cour en est remplie." The Duc de Saint-Simon, in a glorious reign, made the same remark: "and if," as he says, "there are at court singular personages who, without wit or talents of any kind, without distinguished birth, and without any useful qualities, arrive at familiarity with what is highest and most illustrious†," we may be sure that the general world is not left

* Correspondence of Leigh Hunt, vol. i. p. 137.
† Tom. i. 312.

without similar characters. Speaking of Dangeau, he says that he was "très-pitoyablement glorieux," and at the same time "valet;" "as these two dispositions," he adds, "however apparently contrary, are often found joined together in the same person *." Worldliness, in fact, tends to impart to a millionaire, or even to a peer, the thoughts and manners of a laquais. In heraldry it would change the argent of an old shield into the or of a Bond-street undertaker, who thinks nothing fine enough unless there is gilt enough. "Do you remember, viscount, that demi-lune that we took at the siege of Arras?" demands Mascarille of his fellow-valet, both pretending to be noblemen. This spirit would dictate the reply of Jodelet, "Que veux-tu dire avec ta demi-lune? C'était bien une lune tout entière." Now, the wolf is sad to the folds, the shower to ripe fruits, the wind to blossoms of the trees; but to me is sad the vulgar man or woman, however affluent. Do me the honour to be persuaded that such company seems to me low.

"I never liked their talk, their offers less."

"What think'st thou of the rich Mercutio?
Well of his wealth, but of himself so, so."

Lucetta thus in her answer to Julia recoils from it. In fact, one source as well as result of its vulgarity is that the good and men of delicate taste keep back, as Fenelon says, from such society because they are not flatterers and ambitious; they wait till they are sought for, which time won't come in a hurry. On the contrary, the vulgar and the bad are bold, deceitful, ready to come forward from the first to insinuate themselves and to please, being made all of false-faced soothing, and prepared for any thing to content the whims and passions of the blatant beast. They are always for hooking on to some great person or another, just as we of the river are apt to hook ourselves to a willow stump or the camp shed. "They fasten," says a great author, "on rich folks quite naturally. I defy," he adds rather too absolutely, "any member of the British public to say that he does not look with interest upon the man next him at dinner who has got half a million. With money, you will have persons

* Tom. xiv. 337.

in the course of a single evening becoming as fond of you as the most romantic advocate of friendship at first sight could desire*." So it may be in Vanity Fair, where is, as Spenser says,

"Great liking unto many, true love to few."

But neither such liked honoured persons, nor their shadows, are eligible when we go out for the day repairing to the river or the groves; for were they to stay with us whole hours, and talk apace in those hours, my lads, they would not bless us with one happy word. "Some silly philosophers," says Janin, "used to pretend that there was no mountain high enough to command a view of all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." These worldly people see it all in their purse. With that well filled they may hope to have it all, where people without hearts are looked to for advancement as the dispensers of honour; but let them not expect to be welcome where others are seeking and imparting the sunshine of a serene hour, and where "content is such a life we care not for abundance,"—where, in fact, utterly and absolutely, we deprecate their presence, and even the thought that is occupied about them, though here it has of necessity come across us, and though, at the same time, I feel perfectly sure that none of our good-humoured excursionists would, even in moments of impatience, be malicious enough to pronounce over them, when leaving us, the unchristian blessing of Theocritus, "Farewell, and may ye have money untold; and ever may a longing for more possess ye!"

We object to worldliness also as wanting, through its inherent baseness, in all generous elevation of character. "It is prodigious," Mme. Swetchine used to say, "tout ce que ne peuvent pas ceux qui peuvent tout!" These worldly people, who can do any thing they like either by money or favour, are found, when you apply to them in accordance with their repeated invitations, unable to do any thing; they are without the power or the will to perform or almost to think any thing noble and unselfish. But the commonest youth, who merely wants to be merry, would instinctively turn his back on one who sees every thing

* Thackeray.

from the point of view of figures and of promises that he never meant to keep, and

> "Who like a mole is so affected to base
> Earth, and there means to dig for paradise."

It is in the power of your purse to make him speak well or ill of you. He only thinks about how much he can hope to extract from it. He lives for gain of this kind. The Roman poet would add,

> "——— et amore senescit habendi."

"How lives he?" "Religiously, sir," answers Isaac; "for he that feeds well must by consequence live well." Though nothing is right even in this order for him; and, as a witty author says, "what can be more foolish than making oneself wretched in the midst of plenty, because the sea, the air, and the earth won't give him the dainties he wants, or Providence won't send the cook to dress them as the sensibilities of his palate demand?" These are, however, contingencies which can hardly be supposed, where there is what a Roman author calls "conviviorum furor et fœdissimum patrimoniorum exitium culina*."

But what are they to the lovers of the serene? "As for me," says one of them, "those long dinners, served, discussed, analyzed and relished with such solemnity, cause me a mortal weariness. I always eat fast, thinking about something else. A protracted sitting at table makes me feel positively ill, and I needs must ask leave to rise from time to time, if it were only to have a game of romps with a dog."

Upon the whole, worldliness is silly, and it is miserable. If we have only to speak of what it has used well or wanted wisely, of what it has praised or blamed justly, of what it has done bravely and magnanimously, what piously, what gratefully, what humanely, of what, in fine, with any virtue it has either done or suffered, our oratory will soon be at an end. Its inward sense must be very sound, for none comes from it. But without some expenditure of that kind we cannot, as we shall dis-

* Sen. De Beneficiis i.

cover later, realize any of our visions of a serene hour; so, in conclusion, having really no alternative, we must beg leave to decline its company. Sir Omnipotent and Lady Mammon, you must excuse us; there lies your way due west. I believe, when they have rolled on, no one of our company will exclaim with Macbeth, when the witches had vanished, "Would they had stayed!" On the contrary, I believe each will say, "If there be breadth enough in the world, I will hold a long distance." With them will depart important and disdainful airs; and all disobliging and discouraging words will cease to afflict our ears, for in truth 'tis they that make the air unwholesome; and they are smelt above the moon.

But this is not all even now. People in search of serenity object to worldliness thoroughly and finally because it is a characteristic, really they can't mince matters, of the purely vicious, of "the profane and liberal counsellor," as well as of those succumbing to the inconceivable meanness which often belongs to persons called respectable, who like Shylock himself seek to prey, under the form of guests, upon those they inwardly dislike; if not bid for love, or even invited by relations, going to them in hate to feed upon the prodigal, thinking to carry it off with cool unconcerned airs, and who on every occasion, whether great or small, might say of themselves, like Timon's assailants, "We are not thieves, but men that much do want." Each of these, as Benignity says in the old play, has vices most like to virtues; you cannot know them apart by any difference; they wear the same clothes, eat the same meat, sleep in the self-same beds, as the best men and women. But oh! the vile counterfeit! or, as common people would say, "the nasty muck!" that will betray any man, or woman, or cause for a five-pound note!

> "Thou stain to honour! honour? thou'rt beneath
> All the degrees of baseness ———."

"How many have I known," says Ben Jonson, "that would not even have their vices hid? Nay, and to be noted, live like antipodes to others in the same city—never see the sun rise in so many years, would not sin the common way, but held that a kind of rusticity; they would do it new." Our old dramatists drew all these beauties from the life. It is not exactly guardian

angels that they represent walking with them. Timon, at least, does not think that they have such walking companions, saying—

> "There's ne'er a one of you but trusts a knave
> That mightily deceives you.
> Aye, and you hear him cog, see him dissemble,
> Know his gross patchery, love him, feed him,
> Keep in your bosom: yet remain assured
> That he's a made-up villain.
> You that way, and you this, but two in company:—
> Each man apart, all single and alone,
> Yet an arch villain keeps him company."

We object to worldliness in this absolute and ultimate way, for the reason that, as every one knows, benevolence is not the foundation of its character—in fact, for the reason that being cruel, vindictive, and in a supernatural way remorseless, it is incompatible with good fellowship and with that spirit of affection for others which we shall see on our next cruise is so essential to the attainment of our general object, where there is no other inspiration. They are not a good-looking set, I promise you, that await your coming. There's not the fifth part of a good face amongst them all. A man had better visit fifteen gaols, or a dozen or two of hospitals, than once adventure to come near them. If you want a companion for serene hours, and a holiday on the river, or in the woods, would you ever think of going to look for him among those so well described by a great writer—as "lazy in attitude, but with active eyes and tongues sharpened on the whetstone of scandal—the Scaligers of club windows, airing their vocabulary in the park—

> '——— that only "bower"
> (In Moore's phrase) where the fashionable fair
> Can form a slight acquaintance with fresh air,'

where sit amicably side by side the Lady Frosts and Mr. Crampes pecking at each other with sarcastic beaks, occasionally desisting to fasten nip and claw upon that common enemy, the passing friend?"

> "Nor do they trust their tongue alone,
> But speak a language of their own;

Can read a nod, a shrug, a look,
Far better than a printed book;
Convey a libel in a frown,
And wink a reputation down;
Or by the tossing of a fan
Describe the lady and the man."

You have in such circles the intense selfishness, "the alcohol of egotism," as Coleridge calls it, which will stop at no cruelty. When it is a quarrel, you have to answer a strong adversary, an inhuman wretch, incapable of pity, of consideration, void and empty from any dram of mercy. The Duchess of Urbino detects and exposes this feature, exclaiming,

"——— How is the name of gentleman
Dishonour'd by such desperate undertakings,
That, more than guilty of human blood, do kill
Even charity!"

You simpleton! the world, as a famous author says, "is an Argus-eyed, many-headed, sleepless, heartless monster," and so subtle withal that it makes poisoned darts of texts of Scripture, and in order to crush its adversaries tries to arm itself with the panoply and omnipotence of the Gospel! Yes, exactly so; for it talks of what it denounces as if it had the power to consummate your fall, and make it final. It has its tricks of custom in the way of disclosing things that tell to the prejudice of others—asking questions, only as it says for a satisfaction of its thought, using "indeed!" as if it heard of something too hideous to be shown, as if, honest creature, it sees and knows more, much more than it unfolds. Accordingly, people of the world will soon baptize you afresh, and not conditionally either, giving you a new name. They know, and will tell in their way, as I have just remarked, all about it, if you slip ever so little; and, as Cervantes says, "they have adjectives in plenty at command to qualify your person according to your age," either as the young something or the old something. There will be some Prospero to say to you,

"Hast thou forgot this and that? Yes, thou hast, and I must,
Once in a month, recount what thou hast been,
Which thou forget'st."

Now, not to remark that this is an evil and unchristian way of treating people, this is not pleasant; for though not Ariels, we are, most of us, it is to be feared, in one way or other, rather light slipping creatures, and therefore, naturally enough, we don't care to have such persons for company in our serene hours. "What an agreeable thing it is," says Bernardin de St. Pierre, "for a benevolent person to perceive the joy of those who see him come in amongst them, from their knowing that he will have no remarks to make about them afterwards, excepting such as are to their credit!" "Such," says Sainte-Beuve, "was the answer of one who was himself often ridiculed; but the heart finds answers that are victorious, even over wit itself." Your worldly circles, however, aspire at seeing realized a different type. What they have to turn out is one who is to make his way by every thing that is ill-natured. A man of this kind at table, even there "against the hospitable canon," besides often publishing what the divine mercy has wished to conceal, shows himself to be a clever artisan of calumnies; he never wants plaster or colours. "He blames with praises," as Balzac says, "and not with invectives. He seems to give testimony to a great merit; and it's all to make you suspect it. You would say that he laments those whom he accuses, and that he pities those whom he wishes to ruin. He can wound without drawing blood. He passes for a friend that he may hate with more security; and in order to seem charitable, even when he assassinates, he never kills any one without first pronouncing his funeral sermon." He is ever telling us "his private opinion," and so laying himself open to the reproof of the poor negro, "Den if dat's your private opinion, why de debil do you make it public?" We don't want, in short, for companion "some eternal villain, some busy and insinuating rogue, some cogging, cozening slave—who is bent on devising slander."

To finish the matter, and enter its very den fearless of the open jaws ready to devour us, a person that likes the kind of enjoyment that we treat of objects to worldliness independent of all other consequences, to be considered presently, on account of the way it has of looking on common people and "the lower orders." In that way, with the sentiment from which it springs, consists its lair, its strongest hold, its citadel. Now, I see yawn

all "Vanity Fair," affecting only virtuous and Christian disgust. Now, I suspect, we have done it, and may cite the lines of Euripides—"I fear lest we shall incur harm by this; for they who have proud thoughts bear ill the better arguments of their inferiors." However, never mind, comrades, we on the river will say it for all that, or rather we will drink Mr. Ruskin's health when we can quench our thirst at the next lock for saying it better than we could have done; repeating after him that we believe "one of the worst symptoms of modern society to be its notion of great inferiority as necessarily belonging to the character of a common person, whether tradesman, workman, master, or apprentice."

There are a few still who, in opposition to our view, make no mystery of their conviction on this head, being decidedly of opinion with Athenæus, "that we should never do any thing to make the common people arrogant, such as speaking to them in a way of admonition, but that every word which we address to them ought to be in some sort a command; and that we should never play with them, or jest with them, or adopt that foolish way which some people have of treating them, which only makes every thing more difficult for both parties, rendering it harder for the one to obey and for the other to use authority*." In this respect there has been, no doubt, of late a great change for the better in regard to the light in which such matters are viewed; but still faults that are rich are fair, others are not as such noted down; and, "faith, there have been many great men that have flattered the people, who ne'er loved them." There may be more professions now-a-days, but this courtesy is not in every instance yet of the right breed. To speak with truth, it is sometimes only imitating humanity most abominably. The words brethren and charity are not unknown in the circles of "Vanity Fair," and those who make the most sonorous use of them, as a keen French observer says, "are the same who would never consent that brotherhood and charity should pass by the unity of flesh and blood. It is that one likes words and not things. Words serve a purpose sometimes, but things are always repugnant." Be that as it may, the song for serene hours will

* Lib. vi.

not be in point blank contradiction to that of "I'd choose to be a daisy," which does not exactly express the worldly heart.

"I love the gentle lily,
It looks so meek and fair,
But daisies I love better,
For they grow every where;
And lilies bloom so sadly,
In sunshine or in shower,
But daisies they look upwards,
However dark the hour."

As for the other sex, whatever may be our general society, we don't care to have in the same boat with us one of your "idols in the country," as Bombo says, alluding not to a great man, but to a great worldling, one of the things we have read of, things we call worshipful and right worshipful, descended from the house of the Factotums, lords of the soil, and cocks of their own dunghill, who hate a capital city for the reason which made Montesquieu love Paris, because, in some sense or other, every one there is as great as himself. One such lair is enough to infest a whole country: an aristocracy is its strength, as can be witnessed now, to cite but one instance, at Gracedieu and at Garendon. It may be, as there, the education of its youth, the civilizing of its manners, the diffusion of enjoyment by throwing open green glades and inviting paths to its juvenile population, a source of patriotic heroism of the right stamp, by its own domestic examples; it may be even, as there, the direction of all to the final end of man, the propagation of the true faith, the extension of order, comfort, and temporal happiness through the masses, and what is no doubt mysterious, though we might say incontestable, their guidance and that of generations yet unborn, to everlasting happiness. Such is the work of a Christian aristocracy, the natural and supernatural results of a vast territorial property in the right hands; but let us have only a centre of egotism, and one might add perhaps Paganism, where sits worldliness, as it were, enthroned with an idolatrous worship going on day and night in its presence, and from such a nest as this emerge only sinister reptiles—men who know nothing and wish to know nothing about the Christiana

plebs,—the Christian people; men in whose estimation all that run whistling along the streets, and work in shops, all below 1000*l.* a year, constitute "the democracy," a thing, as our old dramatists would say, for some sweet lords and military sirs to "pitch into," if, in its base, vulgar insolence, it should ever dare to murmur any evening at being snubbed or ousted from its own gardens in order to make room for its betters, even were these betters to condescend to come among common folk. We don't like to be snubbed, or see our friends snubbed, by some one like Sir Marmaduke Travers, saying,

> "I shall not forbear jeering these poor things,
> They shall be my mirth ——,"

who seem to think that more of our conversation would infect their brain, being, as they call us, though heaven knows no tribunes, "the herdsmen of the beastly plebeians." Where could we pull up to have a serene hour, and hear a song with men that say,

> "Suffer not the plebeian race to approach
> The selected seat, to virtue consecrate,
> To justice, continence, and nobility?"

Some of the right-hand file will not forgive any of themselves for being less exclusive in their taste. Our landlady can tell that as well as the best of us. Did not even Falstaff himself act this part, as his hostess took care to remind him, saying, "When goodwife Keech was gone down stairs, didst thou not desire me to be no more so familiarity with such poor people; saying that ere long they should call me madam?" "I am not surprised," says an eminent French writer, "that some silly persons of the great world should have but little taste for the delights of the common people. A famous orator of the last century exclaimed, on the subject of Virgil's Eclogues, 'Would to heaven that he had thrown Tityrus where he wanted us to place Æneas!' A man full of the Louvre, of Fontainebleau, and St. Germain, can only speak of courts and cabinets; he would never speak of any one below a duke or a duchess. Now it is certain that to be able to judge of certain compositions one must take the spirit of a common subject, and leave

that of the courtier; one must be accustomed to the equality and manners of Venice, and not have one's head filled with the luxury and superfluity of Paris *."

But one need not pursue any longer

> " —— that catalogue of rich men's sins
> That shall, like plummets, hang upon their heart
> When wings are most required."

We can no longer stay to dilate on these illusions; let us only consider for a moment how well it will be for us all if we can escape but for a day from the whole atmosphere, and from having our thoughts exposed to such influence as it produces, even though we should merely have in view the enjoyment, on the river or any where else, of a few serene hours. In fact, to making a retreat of this kind we may refer the ancient words, "Licet nihil aliud quod sit salutare tentemus, proderit tamen per se ipsum secedere; meliores erimus singuli †."

Megadorus in Plautus makes a curious remark. "Those high families," he says, "that haughty pride, those bountiful portions, acclamations, imperiousness, vehicles inlaid with ivory, superb mantles of purple,—I can't abide things that, by their extravagance, reduce men to"—can you guess the word?—"to slavery." Yes, take note of it; nothing less current, and nothing more true. We need but slightly touch upon the slavery of worldliness, and shake but a few of its outward manacles, such as are constituted by its gloomy exclusiveness, its settled anger, its hatred, jealousy, fear, envy, grief, and all the etcetera of its passions which are the secret but constant tyrants and tortures of its life; for, as to the clanking of these multiplied chains, with all that is involved in them of restraint, servitude, slavery, and captivity,—do what you will, with all the aid of pride and vanity to boot, you cannot extirpate the desire to escape from them, let their form be what it may. As old Chaucer says, you cannot destroy a thing which nature hath naturally set in a creature:

* Balzac, Discours vi.

† Sen. De Otio Sapientis, cap. 28.

"Take any bird and put him in a cage,
And do all thine entent and thy corrage
To foster it tenderly with meat and drink,
And with all the deyntees thou canst think,
And keep it all so kindly as thou may;
Although his cage of gold be never so gay,
Yit hath this bird, by twenty thousand fold,
Lever to be in forest, wild and cold,
Gon eate wormes and such wreechidness.
Let take a cat, and foster him well with milk
And tender fleisch, and make his bed of silk,
And let him see a mouse go by the wall,
Anoon he wayreth milk, and fleisch, and all,
And every deyntee which is in that house,
Such appetit hath he to eat the mouse."

It is even so with man when subjected to the delicate fostering of worldliness in high or middle places; captivity is the result. So that what Seneca says of leisure is true of freedom, "If you wish to feel free you must be either a common fellow or like a common fellow, which, by the way, you may be without the least vulgarity or derogation. Si vis vacare animo, aut pauper sis, oportet aut pauperi similis *." If you must needs be a worldling, you must submit your neck to the collar. And even otherwise how could you be happy, incurring so often, by means of such ambition, the woe that is pronounced against him who "increaseth that which is not his, and who ladeth himself with thick clay?" His body is round engirt with misery; for what's more miserable than discontent? Worldliness, in one of our old dramatists, makes a frank confession of the mental consequence it reaps from its own disposition, saying by the mouth of Fernando,

"These fond philosophers that magnify
Our human nature, and did boast we had
Such a prerogative in our rational soul,
Conversed but little with the world; confined
To cells and unfrequented woods, they knew not
The fierce vexation of community,

* Epist. 17.

Else they had taught our reason is our loss,
And but a privilege that exceedeth sense
By nearer apprehension of what wounds,
To know ourselves most miserable."

Where have you been? "Visiting," replies Lady Eitherside; "and so tired! I protest 'tis a monstrous trouble." "Oh!" exclaims another adept, "put me to gathering all the leaves that are fallen this autumn, making ropes of sand, mustering of ants and numbering atoms, put me to all exquisite torments rather than stay me here one thought more. I would rather endure any misery than a minute such as I have spent within these circles." People who can speak so of themselves are not likely to conduce to any one's serenity, even for an hour. And no doubt their state is really what, in such unguarded moments, they represent it to be. "The poor, who believe in the power of material riches to make men happy, have still an illusion. The rich and worldly have not even that left. They have lost in satiety the last good of the miserable." Stray where they will, without a Margaret's curse, "mischance and sorrow go along with them." Heart's discontent, and sour affliction, are playfellows to keep them company. As the Duc de Saint-Simon exclaims towards the end of his long Memoirs, "Tel est ce monde et son néant*." Therefore the best conclusion is to say simply, "Il faut d'ici déloger sans trompette." You will have lost nothing. See what that spirit leads to even in marriage! To effect that union, as a famous author says, "affection was sacrificed to pride, and that deity can't and won't help them, but takes pleasure in tormenting them." It is not consequently they who can exactly verify the truth of Chaucer's lines,

"O blisful ordre! O wedlok precious!
Thou art so merry, and eek so virtuous."

No, not exactly; at least so far as relates to being merry. But, on the contrary, it is they who furnish an example of what is so humorously described in the well-known old Irish ballad, which opens with

* Tom. xx. 77.

"There was a young man in Ballinacrasy,
That took him a wife to make him unasy."

Such to the letter, as De Quincey remarks, was the life-catastrophe of Addison. So now there in the great drawing-room sits a grave and potent seigneur, or a pale and elegant Aspasia, "ready with a querulous, peevish face, and an unsympathizing, languid utterance, to put to flight one who had entered home perhaps longing for a voice which should invite and respond to a cry of joy*." It is not in such regions that one can see practised the motto of Charles Brandon at the tournament,

"Cloth of gold do not despise,
Tho' thou art match'd with cloth of frize."

"O Vanity Fair! Vanity Fair!" exclaims its historian, "how many might have been serene, and hearty, and happy, but for thee†!" Nothing very wonderful this when men consider, as the Duc de Saint-Simon says, "that such people wish to belong to a world for which the Prince of Peace, without whose friendship there can't be much interior serenity, declared that he did not so much as pray." Would you behold the fruits of experience in regard to its other influences? It is pretty much the same in them all. It is still nothing but what the witches in Macbeth sing of,

"Double, double, toil and trouble;"

or, as the chorus in Sophocles has it,

"Trouble brings trouble to trouble."

And as Cowper, in his celebrated Ode to Peace, demands of that bliss personified,—is it amidst such distractions, that we can receive or harbour sweet serenity? Addressing her he asks,—

"The great, the rich, shall they partake
The heav'n that thou alone canst make?
And wilt thou quit the stream
That murmurs through the dewy mead,
The grove, and the sequester'd shed,
To be a guest with them?"

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* P. Caxton. † Thackeray.

"It is certain," says Madame Swetchine, "that there is in the dissipation of the world a certain withering breath which fatigues, and renders people at the same time incapable of enjoying the interval that necessarily follows it. It is a kind of intoxication which leaves traces after it is over*." Worldliness, indeed, is a subtle contriver, and sometimes in the month of July or so, it reckons excursions like ours—as far as some appearances are concerned—among its artifices. So that actually a water party can

> "Engross the fancies of the fair,
> The few soft moments they can spare,
> From visits to receive and pay,
> From scandal, politics, and play;
> From fans, and flounces, and brocades,
> From equipage and park parades."

Worldliness, bless you! can turn every thing to its own account. Belleîle the eldest, whose ambition knew no bounds, is said by Saint-Simon to have never taken a step, made a visit, joined a party, or taken a trip for pleasure, in short, never to have gone out for the day, unless from premeditated design, for the advancement of his ambitious views and fortune; and the duke adds, that while thus out he used to be all the time closely applied to further his object, without seeming the least in the world to think about any thing beyond what lay at the surface†. No doubt with this sworn fidelity to worldliness, generating a disposition as incompatible with conversations of the kind we are supposing as with the love of the humble, popular, condescending Model prepared for the imitation of the human race, you can have excursions and introductions to a microscopic scene in which the fantastic defects of a past world are represented more or less to the life; you can have all "les Divertissements de Sceaux," minus the character of the epoch, which might have in part excused them; you can have invitations to cold banquets in first-rate hotels in summer time, such as are only saluted from afar by our excursionists, and yet even there supplied in hampers from Fortnum and Mason, which, though wanting the blue

* Lett. i. 75. † Mém. tom. xvii. 109.

jar of Sicilian honey that a poet purchased there and turned to such good purpose, are full of the kind of things that the nurse stowed in the chariot of Telemachus—wines and cates, and—only that they have not to be cooked over fire *—all such things as are expressed in the line

Ὅψα τε, οἷα ἔδουσι διοτρεφέες βασιλῆες,

for which perhaps afterwards, entre nous, the invited guests will have each to contribute largely; not, indeed, from his own stores of information, like the old Deipnosophists, but from the more substantial fund contained within his privy purse, bringing nothing, not from home, but back to it, except his contribution of talk, which seldom however verifies the observation of Ben Jonson, that perfect true fools, bred by the finesse and delicacy of their diet, diving into unctuous pies, and drinking your rich wines, have their wits refined and rarified, though doubtless sometimes a very quintessence of conceit flows from them, able to drown a weak apprehension. But all this was necessary; for every one cannot entertain like that Laurentius who made Rome another Lusitania, as Athenæus tells us; and, as it is, no one can complain of the fare, for which no expense was spared; so that, as Volpone says, "could you have got the Phœnix, though nature lost her kind, she had been your dish." You can have, in short, all commandable delights, enough to have satisfied your old Epicures, and into the bargain a list of most imposing names,—for names even are now shams,—with the most brilliant, the most distinguished equipages, the most rare and costly dresses; each of the company being of course a very proper man or woman, having indeed, as Shakspeare says, "a good outward happiness," which is all that is then wanted, though the guests invited being so merely heterogene and strangers, as Captain Ironside says, "no man knows another, or cares if they be Christians or Mahometans that here are met." With the spirit of worldliness to help you, and to push you forward, and to draw you out, you can have all this; no one says otherwise. But the sort of tranquil, loving, retiring, poetic thing that we call a serene hour? But an interval that resembles it in any

* Athen. vii.

way? Well, an you serve me such another trick, never come in my sight more.

Fenelon knew well what was worldliness when he said, "Behold a man who sought to make himself happy, thinking to succeed by gaining riches and authority. He has gained all he sought for, and he is miserable by his very riches and authority. If he had been a common man, he would have been happy as we are; he would enjoy innocent, simple pleasures; he would love men, and would be beloved by them." As it is,

> "——— his affections are
> A sick man's appetite, who desires most that
> Which would increase his evil."

"Christ compared riches to thorns," says a holy writer, "and rightly; for in fact, besides other effects, they lacerate and wound *." The same observer, from his grave point of view, which agrees well enough with our half-merry one, regards them as fulfilling the prophecy, "Servietis diis alienis, qui non dabunt vobis requiem die ac nocte †." He remarks that those who possess them often exemplify what is said, "that they run through thirst ‡." As if thirsty, they are always hurrying hither and thither; and in fine, he maintains with the wise man, that they eat their bread all the days of their life in darkness, and in many cares, and in bitterness, and in sadness,—"cunctis diebus vitæ suæ comedit in tenebris, et in curis multis, et in ærumnis, atque tristitia §." Would you observe what lofty and generous minds think of the pleasure of worldliness? Balzac used to say that he had no merit in getting rid of his money by giving alms and liberalities, for the reason that he so thoroughly despised what riches conferred, and esteemed so little grandeur. One might relate on this theme many curious and striking instances. For greatness that was not thrust upon men, Pope Clement X., to mention one, evinced a singular horror, as we may gather from an anecdote related by the President de Brosses. When the palace Altieri was finished, the Altieri, nephews of Clement X., invited their uncle to come

* Speculum Divitum.
† Hier. 6.
‡ Ibid. 61.
§ Eccl. 6.

and see it. He had himself carried there, and as soon as he spied from afar the extent and magnificence of this superb building, he turned back struck to the heart, and without uttering a single word about it died soon after. But the truth is, that worldliness so developed has no compensations to offer, no pleasure or attractions for a noble or even sprightly nature. Certainly it is not calculated to seduce even such persons as are born with an aptitude for lively enjoyment. As Pope says, being as it is

> "Content to dwell in decencies for ever,
> So very reasonable, so unmoved,
> As never yet to love, or to be loved,"

they can never feel perfectly at ease, or even inwardly, to any degree, at ease with it. They would be more inclined in its defiance to adopt, after a way of their own, the maxim of the celebrated Franciscan, Olivier Maillard, and say that it is better to lose one's reputation than one's soul; for, after all, the soul is engaged in this particular quarrel, which is a notion of course, however interpreted, that worldliness would deem subversive of its own status, and denounce as a monstrous degeneracy. But, indeed, there is between all generous dispositions, and the whole concrete of this character, from first to last, an inherent and insurmountable antipathy. There is something so cold, so unnatural, not to say repulsive, in it, that it must needs, by those who are better moulded, be instinctively abhorred; for worldliness, after all, is more allied to mind perverted and to spiritual wickedness in high places, than to the frailties of the creature.

In general, however, the truth here is felt by all great hearts. "Wretched," says Nicholas of Clairvaux, "are people thirsting for distinction, seeking eminence, wishing to call themselves after their lands, and assuming a great name with sonorous epithets, to be counted amongst the great of the earth. They abound in riches and provisions for delight; but nevertheless, they cannot be eminent without sorrows, or in such high places without vanity. Desiring endlessly all things one after another, they can have no rest, nor can they find peace for their souls*."

* Nic. Clavanal., Epist. 44.

You see that worldliness, with regard to misery, in the eleventh century,—still distinguishing it from the exalted rank which so often, as in our age, abhors and renounces it,—was pretty much what it is at the present day here in England, where, in spite of a kind of national worship paid to affluence and social distinction, "it is," as the poet Gray says, "a great though an ill-natured comfort to see most of those who have money in plenty, and such eminence, actually existing, even in their own haunts, without pleasure of any kind, without liberty, and without friends." How could one admit persons afflicted with such a malady as eligible companions for a serene hour? It is not alone the prospect of the supreme wretchedness of that lower place, of which the good monk proceeds to suggest the possibility of their having one day to take, in consequence of cultivating it, that constitutes the obstacle; though it would be hard to say why such a consideration should be altogether excluded, and therefore, in point of fact, we have not excluded it. 'Tis not alone, as Strozzo, in the Sisters, says, that

"Lords are transitory;"

which is another thought to make us pause and think a little. It is not alone that even domestic life under that influence too frequently, as we have just observed, might be qualified by the term which Thackeray applies to Addison's marriage with Lady Warwick, calling it "that splendid but dismal union;" which is a reflection from which one cannot escape, even on the river on a summer's day. But even supposing all other things right, worldliness would not suit the purpose we have in view, for the plain, simple reason that, do what you will, those persons whose character it has formed can neither desire nor use the sort of enjoyment that is involved in such intervals. Take but one instance of the least importance, and remark how unwilling they always are to avail themselves of things that other people delight in, and can have whenever they like. "There are several rarities," says Pliny, "in and near Rome, which we not only have never seen, but have never so much as heard of; and yet if they had been in Greece, Egypt, or Africa, they would long since have been the subjects of our inspection and conversation." So it is here on the banks of the Thames. Worldli-

ness does not desire what is close at hand, however sweet and however beautiful; while it stretches out with feverish anxiety towards whatever can convey distinction, though it were something as far off as Shanghai, and as ugly as a temptation of St. Anthony. Massillon said of old, with great truth, that the more worldly we are, the more miserable we are; that the higher we are raised in society, the more insupportable becomes the vacuum produced by the absence of religion; and that, under the surface of pleasures and amusement, there can be no other result at the best but merely a vivacity of ostentation*. Upon the whole, Cowley, speaking of discontented riches, says with great truth,

> "Their dull and sleepy streams are not at all,
> Like other floods, poetical;
> They have no dance, no wanton sport,
> No gentle murmur the loved shore to court.
> Pleasant poverty is better.
> Give me a river which doth scorn to show
> An added beauty, whose clear brow
> May be my looking-glass, to see
> What my face is, and what my mind should be;
> Where waves call waves, and glide along in rank,
> And prattle to the smiling bank."

"Tiresome people," said Madame Emile de Girardin, "put genius to sleep, while they do not destroy its nature. But the world, the world! it renders us like itself; it pursues us with its unceasing irony; it reaches our very heart; its incredulity envelopes us, its frivolity withers us; it casts one of its cold looks on our enthusiasm and puts it out; it disperses all our illusions one by one; it strips us, and when it sees us wretched like itself, made in its own image, disenchanted, blighted, without heart, without goodness, without faith, without passions, and frozen like its own vitals, it introduces us to its elect, and says, 'You are one of us; you have your voucher, pass in!'"

But it is not alone that in a general way worldliness militates against the interests of a serene hour, by rendering wretched of itself the minds of its victims; it is also, in a direct and imme-

* Malheur des Grands.

diate manner, subversive of them in consequence of its disposition to look down upon and stand aloof from the common people. Let us proceed to observe, then, that for the enjoyment of serene hours, it is indispensable to form a different appreciation of that class from the estimate made of it by worldliness, and that we should be animated by a spirit of greater equality, without losing aught of respect for what should be respected in every well-ordained nation, than it possesses or approves of.

It is not, of course,—one must repeat it again and again,—a demagogue, ill of the sickness which made the Jacobins, reviling rank, and speaking evil of dignities, that we want as companion for any hours; though it is hardly, I hope, necessary, we must reiterate our protest against such an absurd inference. We are simple natural people, with heads wholly unperplexed by any social problems. We take things as we find them. We should be sadly troubled if we had with us one of "those grave and melancholy" characters described in the Mémoires de Garat, "nursing their suspicions, and living in the midst of phantoms, men who, from observing that falsehood is sometimes united to politeness, believe in virtue only when it is sombre, and in liberty only when it is ferocious." We don't care to have a churl near us exclaiming, "Heavens, that I were a lord!" and when asked what wouldst do then? answering like Apemantus, "Hate a lord with my heart." Certes, we know, as Chaucer says, that "sith the time of grace come, God ordeyned that some folk should be more high in estate and in degree, and some folkes more low, and that each should be served in their degree." Once for all, let such a disagreeable and, to boot, silly individual be apprised that he has to take himself elsewhere; though, as a little parting politeness which he does not merit, we may recommend him to hear Pliny saying, "Some persons not wishing to seem to favour the great run into the opposite extreme, and behave rudely to them. I advise you to preserve the proper distinctions of rank and dignity; for to level and confound the different orders of society is far from producing an equality among mankind. It is, in fact, the most unequal thing imaginable." On the other hand, what we require is not the condescending style of a privileged class, which

indeed legally no longer exists, betraying a consciousness of social pre-eminence, and practised perhaps through a political motive, as if fearing that national danger which Dr. Arnold pointed out as likely to result from the austere separation existing between our educated and our working classes. That style, as De Quincey observed, would be an anachronism now that legal rights have been won for the poorest classes; but the object we have in view, irrespective of all such fears, and of all such achieved equality, requires what the latter writer rather hastily seems to have deemed logically and properly extinguished for ever, namely, the affectionate style,—which, for aught I can see, is quite as much due to those who have civil rights as to those who have none,—in the noblest constitution of society as much as in one of bondage and imperfection; since, in fact, states of life and conditions, let legislation be what it may, will ever continue to be unequal, and, consequently, occasions will offer themselves when one should speak to others in the style of Philocrates to the captive, "Consider me not your master. What formerly of my right I used to command you, now with entreaties do I beg of you, by our uncertain fortunes, and by our common wants."

On our next ramble, as we already gave out, we shall see that there can be no really serene hours without a sincere, cordial love of mankind, which excludes no class. Here we have only to remark, that for our company on these occasions a friendly and a fellow feeling for the lower orders, for "the lighter people," as Malvolio terms it,—for "le menu peuple de Notre Seigneur," as the good Joinville calls them,—is an essential qualification. In fact, to accomplish our purpose fully, I should wish that the soul of each of us might resemble that of Miron, which was said to be that of all the people. It is necessary that in this regard we should all cultivate that air of the ancient nobility, that easy manner of the old courtier, consequently that we should be extremely polite to our inferiors. If we only walk on the highway, or row a boat on the river, wanting a steersman, we shall be thrown amongst them.

"Hail, fellow, well met,
All dirty and wet.

Find out, if you can,
Who's master, who's man."

Likely enough, we shall need to follow the advice in the merry song,—

"Do not pick and choose too much, nor to age for wealth be sold,"

but

"Look out for a young carpenter only nineteen years old."

The short and the long of it is, on all occasions of this kind we are considering, you must understand, love, and respect the lower orders, otherwise you had better stay at home in your dusky hall, feeding like the suitors of Penelope, an you be so disposed. Out of doors, with us, your company is not desirable, for you are pre-eminently the vulgar, and, with the poet, I must say,

"Que j'ai toujours haï les pensées du vulgaire!
Qu'il me semble profane, injuste et téméraire!"

In opposition to them the Père Boutauld says, "that we must not deny to young people, and to common people, and the poor, what we are bound to render to a piece of canvas or a stone as soon as they can wear a shadow of resemblance to God's saints; that since the human soul has the image of God, it is sacrilege in us to despise each other; that the unfortunate inclination we have to show how little we think of some persons in consequence of their position, is a mania inspired by the demon, administered in the dose of venom that he shed into our hearts on the day when he corrupted our nature; and that if we could be only induced to respect one another as we ought, there would be nothing in life but familiarities, and freedom, and pleasant chaffing, and, at the bottom, celestial sweetness*." "Honesta res est læta paupertas." "I see it with respect," says Gray, "and so will every one whose poverty is not seated in the mind." Besides, labour is a natural law, from which none of us can be exempt without falling into evil. We must imitate hard-working people therefore, and love even to labour like them either at rowing or stitching, at carpentering or errand-going,

* Les Conseils de la Sagesse, 133.

or at something or other which produces physical lassitude. The working man must have leisure, and the man of leisure work, or else, as a great author remarks, there will be an end of all happiness, of all dignity, of all wisdom, of all health of body, and of all clearness of mind. Whoever thinks all this should be as welcome as we have words to bid him, even though his assent were expressed in such terms as those of Molière's physician to his brother doctor, saying, "I approve of this,—'manibus et pedibus descendo in tuam sententiam.'" Never mind his style; his heart is meant for the enjoyment of serene hours; and when we hear such lessons under cloistered roofs, we cannot wonder at poets preferring a walk in their direction to a visit to the hall. And, indeed, this will lead us to remark a very curious fact in the way of coincidence, which is, the conformity that exists between the genius that generally belongs to these excursions, and that which produces such great results elsewhere, not alone in the social and political, but even in the spiritual order. If it were only in consideration, perhaps, for the secret predilections of some sweet, noble-minded, loveable creature that we leave at home, too delicate in health to accompany us, it is pleasant to think that our poor ramblers and boat's company,—like those whose eyes are now bedewed with tears lamenting some one more than beloved, such as our Mary Anne Letitia,—might actually adopt for their own motto, to express what is in their hearts, certain lines from the Rule of St. Benedict, as, for instance, these:—"Honorare omnes homines—Non esse superbum—Juniores diligere, seniores venerari—and Non præponatur ingenuus ex servitio convertenti, nisi alia rationabilis causa existat*." But some one asks, perhaps, is this requiring what can possibly ever prove a genuine thing after all? In spite of what you have just been advancing, must we not say, like Euclio, in Plautus, "It isn't for nothing when a rich man accosts a poor man courteously. I trust no person who, rich himself, is exceedingly courteous to a poor man; when he extends his hand with a kind air, then is he loading you with damage?" This is bad enough; but, what is worse, a great observer of mankind in our times seems not far from being

* Cap. ii. et iv.

of his opinion. "Devotion to the poor," he says, "is, in its disinterested purity, the rarest grace in sanctity. In its debased state, it is one of the commonest features of a piety, the unsoundness of which is testified by nothing so much as the unreality of its mercy." It is an advantage incident to our sort of gymnasium on the river or in the gardens that pupils accustomed to our ways can hear read a passage of this kind and hold up their heads, instead of seeming to wish to be like Chaucer so far only as he describes himself, that is, "staring on the ground."

"Let the galled jade wince, their withers are unwrung."

Happily, with our light sort of people, it will be hardly deemed necessary to make any answer to such a question as Euclio's. Instead of replying to it, they will be for suggesting a different one, that implies neither a heathen heart nor a misgiving. Let us suppose, they will say, some one demanding how can such a qualification really come into play? In order to satisfy this question, which is reasonable enough, let us suppose ourselves started for the day, and already falling in with some that I opine would not have exactly suited our exclusionists; so we have got on board, consequently, rather a mixed merchandise, as the Duc de Saint-Simon qualifies the company at the ball in which the Marechal de Villeroy would have the boy king to figure in a ballet, when, it being necessary to have some good dancers, the son of Law was one of the invited. Well, we are not like the amiable public of that day, that was overjoyed to hear of the youth catching the small-pox, and so being unable to appear at court. We are quite content with all our party. One thing is clear at first sight, there is no one in it so formed by nature as to startle and scare any body, as when the French ambassador, seeing for the first time the Duke of Albuquerque in the royal palace of Madrid, involuntarily exclaimed, "Heavens! what thing is that?" and heard the Duke of Liria behind him say, "Hush! 'tis my uncle." They are each guilty of as good a face as ever my foolish eyes looked upon, at least there be worse faces at court. We can't help it; all the same for that; for, indeed, without being a second Solomon, the experience of each of us, perhaps, is the same as his, and he can say, "Vidi

servos in equis: et principes ambulantes super terram quasi servos*." One need not say any thing about the slaves on horseback; Rotten Row, which we have left at least for the day, is not, I rather think, wholly without them in the height of the season; but positively there are some at least of our crew who have beheld elsewhere verified the last clause. I will not, like Peter, "fight for credit of the 'prentices," but I will profess, with the veracity of an historian, to have met as ingenuous and sunny natures in chance acquaintances among common lads,—young muck, picked up I know not how, unless that it began by their asking the way, and was cemented by their choosing to keep up with me and walk together for a while,—as the best blood of any nation could produce, or to use Chaucer's style,

> "———— as could be found
> In any lord that is in Engelond."

No doubt we should always consort with gentlemanly fellows; but let us interpret this expression broadly, and not according to the views of a semi-barbarous state of society. It does not mean muffs, tufthunters, and worldly fellows. The analogous idea of gentleman in ancient Greece was expressed by terms which mean "beautiful and brave." Saint Louis and Joinville called it "prud'-homie." With that we can't get wrong; for you will never have the good looks without manners corresponding. Ah, truly, "there's no honour like a noble conscience," as Sebastian says. After a little chat, it is pretty clear that our chance acquaintance, though with jacket perhaps a little decayed, carries that treasure about with him, however we may slight what he may have in his basket. He may be said to want the gilt and trappings, the dress of honour, yet he seems striving to keep the seeds and the materials.

> "I've sene lord, and I've sene laird,
> And knights of high degree;
> But a fairer face than young Waters
> Mine eyne did never see."

One can hardly help saying to oneself, like Imogen, when she meets the two forest boys,

* Eccl. x. 7.

> "These are kind creatures. Gods, what lies I have heard!
> Our courtiers say, all's savage but at court.
> Experience, O thou disprov'st report!
> The imperious seas breed monsters; for the dish
> Poor tributary rivers as sweet fish."

But then they are vulgar. Well, perhaps, however admired by such as themselves, noticing, as in the comic song, the style of fashion that they prefer,

> "With turn-down collar of linen and cotton,
> And a nice short coat that touch'd their bottom;"

perhaps, I say, independent of what they fancy, they actually are put to straits sometimes to look just the correct thing for some circles. Some one I know tells me that, calling on a young friend one day, he was surprised to hear that he had not yet come down stairs; when on inquiring, it turned out that he was waiting above for want of a pair of stockings, which his sister then bade him take out of her own drawer, adding the proviso, "to be sure that he did not take a pair of her best." They are vulgar. Yes, and in one sense that's true; and all these allusions to them are so many vulgarities. Why even genius comes in for its place among such things. Did not Trissino, a very great man in his day, speak of the verses of "Ariosto, with that Furiosa of his, which pleases the vulgar," while his own poem, as Panizzi adds, "has the merit of not having pleased any body?" Did not an editor of the Edinburgh Review write to a great English critic and an accomplished scholar, to complain that his colloquial expressions rather alarmed him as being positively vulgar, and made him apprehensive of the durability of their connexions, unless for the future he adopted a more "gentleman-like tone and style." Vulgar! Well, I am afraid there's no help for it. All this rowing, and walking, and lying on the grass, and loving, and admiring, and chatting, and singing

> "——— as lowde and yerne
> As any swalow chiteryng on a barne,"

as well as all this feminine

> "——— skipping, and making game,
> As any kyde or calf following his dame,"

may, if you please, be ranked in the same category. But, as a French author asks, in words rather too quaint for me to venture on repeating them, "What more vulgar than life?" It used to be considered vulgar to love any one. "Let us," says Madame de Maintenon, "leave to the worshippers of that nothing which is called favour and credit, this kind of respect which is often so little sincere, so little amiable; and do, I implore you, have the gross vulgarity to love me." If we are to avoid every thing that is vulgar, we shall be in a jolly way shortly. So pray, my refined creature, allow us to have our vulgarities, and try to profit by them; for let me tell you they can be made very instrumental to many good purposes, whether high or low, and off the river too, far enough away from our proceedings, the fact being that the raw material of humanity is often preferable to the elaborately manufactured piece of delicacy, which is thought by some silly people to be more or alone presentable.

But how they talk! what plebeian phraseology and accent, with their "what sai's" every moment! Well, though I must retain my opinion that their accent is often musical, though their daily chat exemplifies what an illustrious author says, that there is nothing so delicate and so difficult to catch as accent; that it is a thousand times easier to attain the most complicated musical airs than the pronunciation of a single syllable; that a long series of years or the first impressions of childhood can alone render possible the imitation of this pronunciation, which belongs to what is most subtle, and the most undefinable, in the imagination and character of a nation*; and though, as if to shame their pedantic disparagers, even our newspaper boys can speak Greek glibly enough, shouting out "Telegraph," or any other Atticism that from time to time you put in their mouths, I suppose we must admit the style of some young swells to be in general very homely. What makes it difficult for presentation with simplicity, is "que le bas le côtoie," as Montesquieu says. Yet, let me tell you, the celebrated Stephen Pasquier, to whom the French language owes so much, says expressly, that it is a great advantage to hear speak even simple common artisans, each trade and profession seeming to yield

* Mme. de Stael, De l'Allemagne.

bold, natural terms which can enrich one's vocabulary; and he gives an instance of a common little fellow saying of another, that he was "free in harness;" "a happy metaphor," adds the linguist, "which I should never have thought of, if I hadn't spoken to one accustomed to drive a cart." No one that I ever heard of finds fault with the recent author, actually one of the forty, a member of the French Academy, which has for office the preservation of the elegance and purity of language, for making his little Garranche say so archly, Keksekça, instead of repeating at full length "qu'est-ce que c'est que cela?" What a phlegmatic dunce it must be who has no liking for some of our English juvenile vulgarities of style! The historian, Mézeray, in like manner loved to introduce into his compositions popular phrases, even though at times somewhat savouring of very low life; and examples of the same kind abound in our own best literature. It is true those writers who use a language perfect in its forms, without mixture, often become authors of all ages, while others who clothe their ideas in popular and local colours, run a risk of losing their interest in time, and of ceasing to be current; but still, as Rivarol adds, "these popular writers never corrupt a language by the use of exaggerated metaphors or lessons of affectation." They often form treasuries of words; and even, perhaps, the charm is not wholly lost to posterity, though, if it were to be, what then? We must think of those around us, let the wise ones say what they will; and the present have interests that ought to be consulted. Now, the truth is, there is a lively, fresh imagination in popular speech, which justifies Xenarchus for saying, when alluding to it in his Purple,

> "Poets are nonsense; for they never say
> A single thing that's new. But all they do
> Is to clothe old ideas in language new,
> Turning the same things o'er and o'er again,
> And upside down. But as to these,
> They are an inventive race!"

When Clerimont, in an old play, tries to commend certain men by saying, they are very grave authors, it is replied, "Grave asses! mere essayists; a few loose sentences, and that's all. A

common fellow would utter as good things every hour, if they were collected and observed, as either of them."

But let us take a broad view of the whole subject of high and low, such as an artist would take if he had to represent it. "What is intended by the term vulgar," says an old polite writer, "is not, methinks, enough understood. In me, indeed, that word raises a quite different idea from what it usually does in others. It is to me a very great meanness, and something much below a philosopher, which is what I mean by a gentleman, to rank a man among the vulgar for the condition of life he is in, and not according to his behaviour, his thoughts, and sentiments. An artisan may be much superior to one who only lives to serve himself. The question is, who acts his part best, not what that part may be." Nor mistake me, says even old Peacham, in his treatise on the "Complete Gentleman," "that I would deny a prince or gentleman the benefit of discourse and converse with the meanest; for majesty and greatness must have the remission and relaxation sometimes to descend from the court to the cottage *." It is rather disheartening, I own, to find all this so well felt and expressed in a former age, which had even broken the ties that might have connected it with far better and more popular times, seeing how little progress has been made since in reducing such philosophy to practice. However, as such words are never wholly lost, but are sure to make an impression on some one, as "every bullet has its billet," let us cite another passage of the same import. "One would be sadly out in one's reckoning," says Balzac, "if one thought to despise generally all that is called popular, as if nothing good could spring unless from the order of knights and patricians. The apparent vulgarity with which the comic poets accommodate their matter, and that humble expression of ordinary actions, does not want a secret dignity such as virtue gives to persons of low condition. When Varro ascribes grandeur to Pacuvius, and mediocrity to Terence, he does not mean to prefer one to the other, or to esteem the grand more than the middle; for there is a mediocrity all golden, pure, and brilliant, such as antiquity has conceived. It has been said that nature

* P. 266.

is never so great as in little things; and in like manner with respect to art, one may esteem the less more than the great; for, in fact, the mediocrity of which we speak being of as good house as grandeur, since they have both a common origin, who can doubt but that this noble common knows how to preserve its rights and dignity? It loses no honour in renouncing vanity, nor forfeits nobility by its familiarity with the people and with popular affairs. It is not degraded by its lowliness. It goes on foot, but does not let itself be trodden upon." Certainly, as a famous author says, "the ease and grace of highly civilized life do not surpass those of untutored nature that neither concedes nor claims a superiority to others." "I love the poor common people," says Montesquieu, "they are not learned enough to reason sophistically. They are right in their tastes even when they are not in their manners." "Persons poor but not destitute belong to a region, in my opinion," says another eminent writer, "in which the heart is more fully developed than in any other." Truly, he might well say it. Meeting once a poor boy who could hardly get along on crutches, his leg—as he told the stranger who accosted him—having been only lately amputated, this other told him to call the next day at a house which was in the neighbourhood, for he had nothing with him at the time, and his own home was too far distant. Well, the lad did go to that obscure tenement, and the little matter that was left for him was given, and that was all the stranger heard about it. But the poor young person who happened to be charged with administering this relief might have mentioned a trait of herself that would be very appropriately recorded here; for two months afterwards, being dead, her sister related that she had burst into tears on seeing the boy, and remained for two hours crying and lamenting his fate. What think you of that trait in the character of one who was but little removed herself above the fears and anxieties of poverty? Indeed, as a great author says, "there are many virtues down below. A day is coming when they will be up above. This life has a to-morrow."

The common people are to this day, in many good respects, Homeric. Have you ever considered what that means? "While the Jewish records," says Mr. Gladstone, "exhibit to us the link between man and the other world in the earliest times,

the poems of Homer show us the being of whom God was pleased to be thus mindful, in the free, unsuspecting play of his actual nature. In these latter we find ourselves amidst a system of ideas, feelings, and actions different from what are to be found any where else; some of them subsequently to reappear bright and fresh for application among later generations of men, carrying us back to the early morning of our race, the hours of its greatest simplicity and purity*." In much that this Homeric world exhibits we see represented the life of the common people now living around us, though we leave it to foreigners to point it out. Saint-Marc-Girardin actually finds in the letter of an English private soldier, named Race, written to his wife on the eve of a battle in 1854, the exact language, thoughts, and sentiment of Ulysses when he took leave of Penelope. It is a curious fact, that many usages rather looked down upon now in England as belonging to the people that are not at the tip-top of the tree, were formerly familiar to the great. To take but one instance. The custom of valentines descended to the common people from the highest class of society. And this was not exclusively an English custom; it prevailed in Provence in the time of René d'Anjou. We find traces of it at the ducal court of Lorraine, and it was no less observed in the highest circles on the other side of the Alps; for we read that in the castle of Valentino, near Turin, on the banks of the Po, there used to be a fête given on St. Valentine's day, when each lady used to call the gentleman who waited on her her Valentine. It was this castle which the family of De Brosses in later times sold to Emmanuel Philibert, when it became a royal residence. But this is rather a digression, and perhaps not quite a safe one; let us confine our observations to manners.

Upon the whole it may be said truly, that men have only to form a personal acquaintance with people of the lower order to feel convinced that the estimate formed of them by worldliness is fraudulent. It has been cheating us, I do think.

But it is not enough for us to have freed our mind by such familiar observations, as well as by some lofty and generous views, from the gloomy prejudices of worldliness in regard to

* Studies on Homer, i. 7.

the common people. We must not suffer to remain in our thoughts on such occasions the faintest trace of that mistrust arising from an idea that we are not fully borne out in so doing by the example of persons whom it is an honour, even in the way of the world, to imitate; and this is a matter which I'll make you shortly understand, and even, as Cervantes says, "drink in a silver spoon."

I suppose we must not for this purpose allude to the times when, according to the old song, "Love was a young man," and when it used to be said,

"——— Amor non talia curat;"

though certainly it is rather a curious fact, that this passion, which some people make us afraid to name, should impart to persons of the gayest and liveliest turn of mind the tastes which, as Richard of St. Victor remarks, "will be proof against the terrors of the last day;" which it positively does; for it makes them detest worldliness, referring them for an example to the fields and valleys where

"The daisy-flower is to the summer sweet,
Though utterly unknown it live and die *,"

causing them to esteem the very things most opposed to "the pride of life," as is expressed in the lines,

"O tantum libeat mecum tibi sordida rura
Atque humiles habitare casas;"

and also in the answer to Littleworth, asking, "Must I call him thus?" when in the very sanctuary of worldliness, where each resembles him "qui stupet in titulis," he who is besotted with titles, hears

"——————— It is
Not necessary; Tom, or Jack, or Harry,
Or what he's known abroad by, will sound better,
That men may think he is a Christian."

A great novelist, when describing the effect of love felt for the first time by a woman of high rank, says, "that her heart,

* D. Gray.

which in all the dissipations and grandeur of the world had never been awakened, awoke now," and "that the world, and the years that the world had wasted, seemed to fly away as a cloud." In that respect what more could be wrought by the prospect of the world itself coming to an end? and, in fact, even without being in love, but merely while cherishing the general turn of mind that we are recommending, it is easy to pass in imagination, in a most spiritual mood, from such impressions to one's death-bed, and anticipate the sort of pleasure that one may expect to feel then from the consciousness of having in all relations abjured worldly pride and loved equality. Some will exclaim, "How shocking to talk of love and the last day in the same breath!" But every one will not be so quick to see the impropriety of doing so. "Consider," says Richard, "what will be in the minds of men in that hour when they will begin to detest the precious things which are the objects of worldly ambition, and even to be no longer able to endure the sight of the very riches they formerly admired*." I say, it is curious, and it seems to me to involve nothing shocking, to reflect that a strong and passionate attachment to another will in many instances have forestalled these impressions, having already delivered minds from the infatuation of worldliness, and restored things in idea at least to the state in which they were in that happy garden to which we all look back, where

> "Adam did no jointure give,
> Himself was jointure to his Eve."

When Caperwit asks "What portions have they?" speaking of certain girls, Goldsworth answers, "You should be a purse-taker by your inquiry after their money." The poet Dekker, in his song of the happy heart, seems to strike at the root of such delusions, expressing a more natural, and after all a more general sentiment in the lines—

> "Work apace, apace, apace, apace;
> Honest labour bears a lovely face."

But, above all, it is Lucina whose frank confession will bear out what we ventured to predicate; for she says to her suitor,

* De Mundi Fine.

"———— I have consider'd,
And I could wish with all my heart you were
Not half so noble, nay, indeed, no gentleman."

"How, lady?"
"Nay, if you give me leave to speak my thoughts,
I would you were a fellow of no degree.
* * * Nay, pardon me, sir,
In the humour I am in, I wish, and heartily,
You were a son of the people."

"Your reason?"
"Because I love you."

"Few women wish so ill to whom they love."
"They do not love like me then."

This, perhaps, you think with Fairfield, sounds like a new doctrine from women; but if all were known it is a very old one from their lips, and, as Carol answers,

"'Twould concern your peace to have
Some faith in it."

O county Orlando! O king Sacripant! O king Agrican! O Ferragus! O thousands of others! what say you when the daughter of Cathay becomes the wife of the lowly-born lad? Truly, those familiar with the adventures of Angelica can tell a tale in point. No one need be at a loss to find one, for, as Tasso sings,

"Whether with lowly or heroic men,
There am I Love; and inequality,
As it may please me, do I equalize."

When the rich old bee-master of Messina, and father of Maria, in the love-story connected with the earthquake of 1783, used sometimes, with a petulant sigh, to intimate at table what a pity it was that she had not married the rich and high-feeding citizen he had provided for her instead of Giuseppe, the young vine-grower, whom she had espoused, Maria would touch one of her husband's feet with her own under the table, and with a squeeze of it that repaid him for the mortification, would steal

a look at him, which said, "I possess all which it is possible for me to desire*."

The tenets of pure affection present, however, a region which we must not venture on here, having already, in all conscience, a sufficient number of persons who will be hard to deal with. There are certainly facts revealed by it, quite harmless as to their social and political tendency, so long as we suppose good common sense in our readers, which pedants of a certain class, always distrusting it, are nevertheless very unwilling to recognize or communicate. There are discoveries made here and there with regard to the relative happiness and merit of ranks and individuals, which are hardly dreamt of where the reign of absolute conventionalism is undisturbed; and where those who support it would rather die embalmed in its grandeur like mummies, than enjoy for a life what reinstates us in the golden age. We must pass on therefore quickly, and the less said on such matters the better it will be thought by some, for this whole disputation to them is like probing an ulcerated wound, which their own pride has righteously inflicted. But there are other sides on which we may view the sentiments of the best and greatest with regard to this esteem for those who are not in a high condition. For what think you of Cicero, when no lover, changing the words of Antigenidas, "Mihi cane et Musis," into "Mihi cane et populo, mi Brute," and adding, "for what the multitude likes, the learned should like, so that the judgment of a wise man should never offer any discrepancy from the judgment of the vulgar?" Or, to cite a more trivial instance, what think you of Annibal Caracchi being guided in his estimate of a picture by the effect it produced upon a poor uneducated person? or, to go back to times of still more awful worldliness, what think you of Pomponius Secundus, the tragic poet, crying out, "I appeal to the popular judgment," whenever his friends and he differed about a passage, such regard did he pay to the populace? Indeed, the Romans generally submitted their works of genius to the same tribunal, from their notion of a general and innate taste being implanted in all mankind of what is just and natural in the moving arts. Then, what's more

* L. Hunt, A Jar of Honey.

to our point, perhaps, what think you of Gay's testimony when, speaking of the first representation of the Beggar's Opera, and their fears respecting its success, he says, that they were encouraged by overhearing the Duke of Argyle appealing to the same judges, and saying, "It will do, it must do; I see it in the eyes of them?" The approving eyes of the lower orders of London being taken by a Scotch duke for a decisive verdict on a question of taste, seems a fact strangely at variance with modern views; but many of the prologues of our old plays, by Garrick and others, openly adopt the same criterion, as in the lines—

> "I've always found, that none such hopes inspire,
> As you, dear brethren, of the upper tier.
> Therefore now here again since I am one of you,
> Whether adorn'd in grey, green, brown, or blue,
> This day stand all by me, as I will fall by you."

"What has encouraged me all through life in writing books," says a great French author, "is the fact that they have not remained in the aristocratic region of intelligences, but that they have been relished by the people; and in truth, they have been better read and understood by those in that class, who have the sentiment of the ideal in their aspirations, than by many artists who only care for the positive." How often has genius even sought the books—"queis manus insudet vulgi,"—and directed its own works thus in preference to the dwellings of the common people, as in the lines,

> "Ergo, care liber, timida circumspice mente,
> Et satis a media sit tibi plebe legi *."

How often has genius sat at the feet of the common people to treasure up their sayings, their proverbs, their songs, and their tales! Look at Grimm going from cottage to cottage, or, still more, at Perrault, who, being old and a bourgeois of Paris, made the people come to him. "It seems certain," says a great critic, in allusion to the latter, and, he adds, "it is satisfactory to know it, that it was not from books he drew the idea of his im-

* Ovid, Trist.

mortal work: he took it out of the great common reservoir, from oral tradition, from the speaking lips of his poor suburban neighbours. He preserved that character of popular literature which consists in bonhomie. He drank at the source in the hollow of his hand. That is all we need ask." "The people and the public," Wordsworth observed, "are two distinct classes, and as things go," he added, as if witnessing what we behold, "the former is likely to retain a better taste the less it is acted on by the latter*." I think we should feel uncomfortable in the presence of one who differed from this opinion. It is a most true remark; for just fancy "the public" being thought simple, unsophisticated, Homeric, and affectionate! You might as well suspect the people of being under the detestable influence of the scurrilous and impious scribes who cater for the reading public.

But look, now, at gallant fellows, at brave, illustrious men like Vauvenargues and Cervantes. What pleasure did they seem to take in being familiar with the common people! "When I listen to these simple people," says the former, "I find that they talk about common things, that they have no profound principles of their own invention, but I find also that they do not reason falsely like people of the world; I find, on the contrary, that their thoughts are more natural, and that the simplicity of their ignorance is far less removed from truth than the subtlety of science and the imposture of affectation." In Spain, indeed, every Christian is considered a gentleman, the lowest bourgeois having the same thoughts as the constable of Castille; but how the knightly Cervantes can revel in the pleasure of painting humble life, even in the persons of the two young vagabonds, Rinconète and Cortadillo, down to the minutest details respecting their good looks and ragged apparel! A little satire, no doubt, is intended; but for all that, does he not seem to enjoy a serene hour as if he was sitting along with them on that way-side bench where they meet each other for the first time under the inn porch, and one says to the other, "From what land is your grace, seigneur gentleman, and towards what side do you direct your steps?" "As for my land, seigneur

* Coleridge, Lectures upon Shakspeare.

chevalier," says the little one, "I know not where it is, nor am I better informed as to where I am going." "If that is the case, by my faith," replied the eldest, "your grace does not seem to have come from heaven, and as you cannot stop long in a place like this you must go somewhere. Something tells me that it is not without a mystery your grace and I have met here, and I think that we ought to be intimate friends from this day to the last of our lives." You can tolerate these persons out of the fields, perhaps, you say with a grave pompous face, who have only brown hands and brown money, who, at one-and-twenty, are only able to write a sheep's mark in tar, and read their own capital letters; rustics, somewhat like the militiaman who could not tell his right foot from his left, and so had to be taught to march to the words hay, straw, hay, straw, a bundle of each being tied round his legs to distinguish them. All this you endure well enough, or rather, perhaps, feeling yourself somewhat of a feudal lord, this seems to have a certain alliance with your own importance as a rich country proprietor; but then, you add haughtily, "The archers of Finsbury, that come a ducking to Islington ponds," the London shop lads,

> "Tied to perpetual language of What lack ye?
> Which they pronounce as they had been taught like starlings,
> If any gudgeon bite, to give their souls
> For less than sixpence in the pound."

"Well, to be sure!" the women will be heard saying, settling their bonnets straight with their tiny hands after this one has brushed by, looking just as if he thought there was no one else in the street but himself. But what prospect of serene hours, my grave don, can you hope to have on the river or on the hill-side if all can be spoiled in an instant by the entrance of some young townskip, some poor youth, "whose birth and careless stars ordained him to be humble?" Suppose it be some "what-lack-you," or, as you add, "finical-farcical cit from within the walls," who no longer, happily by the way, "has to watch the rats and customers by owl-light?" Swift writing to Gay did not mean to insinuate that his company was a bar to pleasure when he said to him, "You are as arrant a cockney as any hosier in Cheapside." Gibbon did not fear to displease his

friends of the great world when he said that "in England, as well as in the Italian commonwealths, heralds have been compelled to declare that gentility is not degraded by the exercise of trade." The stately Spaniard would have approved of the remark of a contemporary on our London apprentices, who are not the less pleasant for being so inoffensive. "Can any one," he asks, "fail to have noticed them in the street on Sunday? And though they do not say my lord to each other, or signor gentleman, were there ever such harmless efforts at the grand and magnificent as the young fellows display! They can never excite our anger. They are usually on the best terms with themselves and with every one about them. Their occasional fooling," he adds, becoming himself aggressive in a way that we need not follow, "is surely more tolerable than the precocious puppyism in the Quadrant or whiskered dandyism in Pall Mall?" I am much mistaken if our "respectable" London lads out for the Sunday do not yield as pleasant, as intelligent, and as generous companions, as fair specimens of the "animal carissimum Deo," to use the words of Grotius, as any class of society can hope to furnish. Have you ever sat on the same bench with them in the park, and entered into their conversation in a friendly style? If you have had the same experience this way as myself, and have left them without a feeling of regret that you cannot have them for your companions every day in the week, I can only conclude that your appreciations of character, to say nothing of elective affinities, differ from mine. Contrasts can be odious, but it is not in every drawing-room or club window, I opine, that you can have just that sort of freshness, that sort of ingenuous enthusiasm for what is true and beautiful, which is found sometimes in them. Of course, it may require some courage to say all this, but facts are facts, and, moreover, very classical sentiments these, let me tell you. Do you ask for proof? "These were not senators," says Pliny, evincing the same indifference to rank on one occasion, adding, "but propriety of conduct knows no distinction of class or title." Your old nobility, like the true learning, before upstarts imposed their views on the higher circles, formed men of these views. "They carry their great air," as a late writer says; "they speak of common life more largely and generously than

other men do. They regard the world with a manlier countenance, and see its real features more fairly than the timid shufflers who only dare to look up at life through blinkers, or to have an opinion when there are others to back it*." They seem to know instinctively that

> "Your poetry, though heavenly born,
> Consorts with poverty and scorn."

How many, under these combined influences, in a quiet way, without meaning ill to any class, have turned from marble halls and perfumed banquets to the bench by the river-side, or once or twice to some lowly tenement associated in consequence of some past fortuitous event with true and not feigned friendship, where could be had

> "One feast, one house, one mutual happiness!"

and, though a good rower is often something at the latter end of a dinner, where, as another poet says,

> "Small cheer, and great welcome, makes a merry feast!"

Yes, truly, when perhaps the giver could be described in Shakspeare's words, when, upon

> "That day, she was both pantler, butler, cook;
> Both dame and servant; welcom'd all; serv'd all;
> Would sing her song, and dance her turn; now here,
> At upper end o' the table, now, i' the middle;
> On his shoulder, and his; her face o' fire
> With labour: and not like one retir'd,
> As if she were a feasted one, and not
> The hostess of the meeting."

"I enjoy your little cottage," writes a poet to his friend, "which cannot be too little or too humble for me, rest assured, as long as there are large hearts in it. I defy you to live in a less cottage than I have done, yet it has held half-a-dozen friends in it all at once; and they have made worlds of their own within it." The serene-hour-seeking race I speak of, therefore, does not date from yesterday, my lord. Before the rise of "modern de-

* Thackeray.

mocracy" there was the man who sought his object with simple people,—who understood in a sense of his own the magic oracle addressed to the Duke of Somerset, "Let him shun castles; safer shall he be upon the plains than where castles mounted stand,"—who preferred dark forgetfulness and deep oblivion with peace to social glories with their train of consequences—jealousy, offence, emulation, and discord,—

> "Forumque vitat, et superba civium
> Potentiorum limina,"—

who would say to others of vulgar ambition, with Demetrius, "Do I entice you? Do I speak you fair? Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth tell you I do not, nor I cannot love you?" There was even the nobleman, in order, as it were, to give testimony in their favour, even after his death, wishing to be interred at the feet of the poorest of the common people, like Balzac, who desired to be buried in the hospital of Angouleme, "at the feet of the poor who were there already buried." There was the high and accomplished lady like the Marchioness de Sablé, that wife of a Montmorency-Laval, that pupil of the Hotel de Rambouillet, that précieuse who had indulged to such an excess in the taste for all delicacies, ordering in the same way, and, no doubt, partly for a similar reason, that "she should be buried, without pomp and without ceremony, in the common cemetery of the parish 'comme une personne du peuple*.'" The truth is, and why any one should be afraid to speak it I can't conceive, that on the principle of free trade, it is but rational to take off high duties which yield no protection to any good interest, and to steer for the immense regions that must yield, in greatest abundance, and with most facility and least cost, the commodity we are in search of; and therefore when we want, under difficulties, to obtain a few serene hours, a prohibition on the entry of such common folk seems very injudicious and impolitic. Of course, being such abolitionists, we shall be taunted by a few wise heads, saying, like Boileau, that we like "nous encanailler" with them. But grumble as you may, or show yourself ever so familiar with police courts,

* Cousin, Madame de Sablé.

the Greek poet spoke truth when he said "the being accustomed to live in mediocrity of life is best," adding even, "that it is better for mortals to possess a poor, but honest relative, than a base rich one;" and your Baron Grimm was not of a different mind, apparently, when he said, "ce que nous appellons la société, est ce qu'il y a de plus léger, de plus ingrat, et de plus frivole au monde." In the celebrated oration on the General Drouot, which alone would have merited the academy, its eloquent author failed not to record that the period of his life to which that great man looked back with fondest regret was that which he spent in the house of his parents at Nancy. Now, he was the son of a baker, and in the intervals between his school hours he used to carry the basket of bread to their customers, like any of our bakers' boys. Such was the condition in youth of which the memory haunted the General Drouot amidst the splendour of the Tuileries. "You are astonished, perhaps," continued the orator; "you ask what charm could there have been in that? It was," he replied, "the charm of obscurity with a Christian education, the charm of innocence and of poverty*." No, there are some who will speak as liberal as the air; let who will cry shame against them, yet they'll speak. There is a pleasure, they will say, in being thrown with those who in this sense live

"Ut prisca gens mortalium."

They will say that they love a mind shining through any suit, which needs no false light, either of riches or honours, to help it,—that they rather fancy even the alternately soft and loud-sounding footed step of the common people; when in the latter case every stone rings as it strikes against the iron of their well-shod half-boots, as Theocritus himself condescends to notice. "Of course," as St. Francis de Sales says in his amiable way, "à petit mercier, petit panier." All may be very little in regard to the persons we are now speaking of. But is it not well sometimes to see a fine house and a thatched barn in the country laying their heads together, as Close says? And, besides, after all, how could they exist without each other? "From me,"

* See Sainte-Beuve, Causeries du Lundi, i.

says Poverty, "the rich have all things that they stand in need of; for I sit compelling the artisan like a mistress to seek whence he shall have subsistence, making shoes and dresses, and houses, and cart-wheels, and ornaments for the person, and all things useful and beautiful; so that I am the cause of many blessings to all men, and, in fact, all your blessings are through me keeping laborious youth to its daily work." "I have a longing desire," says the Duke in the Antiquary, "to see the fashions of the vulgar," adding,

> "Variety does well, and 'tis as great
> Delight sometimes to shroud one's head
> Under a coarse roof, as a rich
> Canopy of gold."

Of course, here in England, we have no right to expect to find among our population such lives of incomparable goodness, or minds in such accordance with the Christian principles, as are every year commemorated at a meeting of the French Academy. It is for others to look to the reason, and explain why so few can now be found to agree with Chaucer in saying, that

> "Humble folk ben Christes friends, contubernially with him,"

a task which, however in one sense distasteful, will prove pleasing to some, perhaps, as being likely to touch on matters near the top of their own pedigree, which, at the best, being rather short, always charms them when it can be seen lengthened a little by means of links, however ugly. The result of this investigation will fully explain why Providence, no doubt, holds our lower orders to be exempt from paying any longer such a tribute — the discharge from it, nevertheless, constituting the greatest sorrow that is reserved for them in this life; for oh! what would they be if they had had such examples before them in their walk of life, if they had been well taught in their childhood, or if they had ever breathed the atmosphere of faith? But still even under their adverse circumstances, and qualify themselves as you may, we owe to the common people examples of humility, freedom, frugality, industry, endurance, gratitude, and cheerfulness; for it is still true, as Cicero says, that there is nothing so easy as to change the disposition of the multitude

all of a sudden from sadness and even from ill-humour, which seldom inspires them, by a pleasant word or two, or by a joke. There's something still, even here, in being low on the ladder. Well, if you hadn't been a gentleman, you'd have made a stunning common fellow, said some one unpremeditatedly to another, who understood and felt it as what it was not even, perhaps, directly meant for, a compliment. Yes, truly, we all owe much to the lower classes; and, besides, take again a selfish point of view. From what advantage, from what career of usefulness, from what pleasure or amusement to sweeten our common existence have they ever betrayed the faintest wish to exclude us? They do not ask those who cater for their recreation and refreshment to deny entrance to persons of different habits from their own. It is not they, above all, who shut their doors against a setting sun. There is no repulsive porter at their gate at any hour, but rather one that smiles, and still invites all that pass by. And then what serene pleasure if you only oblige them! Do a favour to one of them in distress or sorrow, and all you'll get for it will be, in a half-smothered voice, "you are so kind!" and then an awkward silence lest any sparkles should be seen falling. Though it is presumption to cite so grave a testimony, one can't help remembering that the Prophet when speaking of those who treat their inferiors thus, as if hardly able to find words to express their serenity, is obliged to repair for similitudes to such haunts as are frequented by people in search of pleasure; for, after saying that their darkness shall be as the noon-day, and that the Lord will give them rest continually, and will fill their soul with brightness, and deliver their bones; he adds, "they shall be like a watered garden, and like a fountain of water whose waters shall not fail."

But to return to the goodness of the lower orders themselves. "The fame of human actions," Pliny says, "depends upon the station of those who perform them. The very same conduct shall be either greatly magnified or entirely overlooked as it happens to proceed from a person of distinguished or obscure rank." More or less, it may be feared, this continues to be the case; but there is the goodness still, if you'll only stoop to examine it. And is the world in any circle so rich in that commodity that you can afford to pass it by when it presents itself?

These simple, unknown people who are thought nothing of, who neither write books nor edit newspapers, nor read reviews, nor have their box at the opera, nor even any position in society, are charitable, kind, moderate, unaffected, often heroic—indulgent and human ever. They do not as the world does, treat the weaknesses of others with cold, bitter mockery. They abhor what is ungenerous, and base, and vicious, but they do not laugh at the force of what is romantic and harmless, and stigmatize every genuine feeling of the common human heart. They do not revile, condemn, or judge any but the pharisaical worldling, or the hardened and flagitious; yet all this is unobserved.

> "The jewel that we find, we stoop and take it,
> Because we see it; but what we do not see
> We tread upon, and never think of it."

But then, perhaps, taking religious ground, you refuse assent to these propositions; you say that the plebeian class is depraved. What! do you come amongst us in search of serene hours with the mind of a lawyer in his noviceship, belonging to the inns of court, who judges of a whole class, and of human nature from what he sees and hears in the tribunals of the police? Those you despise might at least retort and say,

> "Tu, cum sis quod ego, et fortassis nequior, ultro
> Insectere velut melior? verbisque decoris
> Obvolvas vitium? ————
> ———— ———— Tolle periclum,
> Jam vaga prosiliet frenis natura remotis."

But, since they often say truly of themselves, "If our betters play at that game, we must not dare to imitate them," we are not driven to such recriminations when undertaking their apology. Of genuine delicacy, and true juvenile modesty, we on the river have seen examples, even in bargemen. Fleer and jest if you will, but you shall have an instance here, without waiting for what will be produced later. One summer's day, then, the crew of a four-oar, somewhat wearied by a sharp stream, tied their boat to the stern of a coal-barge, about a mile below Chertsey-bridge. Three young men navigated it, and received on board the new comers, who soon fell to chatting with them

on all subjects. One of the bargemen being asked very innocently the meaning of a certain allusion that occurred in a little book about the river, the youth interrogated began to scratch his head, and then, smiling a little, and looking archly at his comrades, said, "Why, as for that, I really don't know how I could tell it to you or begin speaking of it." And then to see the generosity of such fellows! To these same bargemen one of the crew, after a few tunes had been played on the cornet by a comrade, which certainly sounded most harmoniously over the Chertsey meadows, went about with a hat in his hand by way of frolic; whereupon the poor young navigators, taking it quite seriously, had every one of them immediately his hand thrust into his pocket to find the remuneration which they only discovered later was merely demanded out of fun. Well, such are your poor common people every where. Kindness, a wish to please and to be pleased, are at the bottom even of their faults; but they have more refinement too, and more heart than some give them credit for. We are assured that it is even these very persons whose example can effect conversions to goodness. Does not a great poet and observer of human nature put in the mouth of the poor servant Sganarelle arguments to prove the folly of Don Juan's atheism? arguments, without being unsuitable to the speaker, that could not be strengthened or better expressed by Bossuet or Leibnitz. You have the same observation by a living author, who makes his hero exclaim, "God help and God bless thee, little Savoyard! Thou hast done Pisistratus all the good in the world. Thou hast corrected the hard wisdom of the gentleman just gone. Pisistratus is a better lad for having stopped to listen to thee." Such is the reply given in a celebrated novel to a common boy whose strong and simple faith had suggested to his inquirer the Christian thought,—brought in a new way home to him by a fresh, artless manner of expressing it,—that the lad's father, about whom he had inquired, was at once dead and living*. In the tale of M. Delécluze, so accurately copied from what he had seen of life around him, Louise de Soulanges, void of all religious sentiments, deaf to the voice of the good curé, insensible to the beautiful sentences of the

* The Caxtons.

great theologian and philosopher, is at last converted by the simple conversation of a poor peasant girl of fourteen, Toinette, who, on the death of her mother, had taken charge of her family: no great theologian, not extraordinarily devout, but one in whom the sense of duty had kept alive the idea of God. Brownson has delivered the same testimony: "No class," he says, "has contributed more to the growth of our religion here in the United States than our servant girls from the old world*." Do you smile and refuse to admit that evidence? There are still plenty of witnesses more to summon. Call up, for instance, the military chaplains of the British army, and let them state what they have generally found up to the rank of sergeants, and what they have found above it.

Upon the whole, what is the most grave consideration of all, as this popular turn of mind brings us nearer to Christianity, we cannot doubt, not only its adaptation to promote serene hours, but also its conformity to the sentiments of the greatest and best minds. Stigmatize it as you will, it has one immense dignity at least, that of sharing in the obloquy incurred by our religion itself. Yes; for as a great French orator has lately remarked, "Jesus Christ had but one misfortune, so to speak, the noblest of all, it is true, the most worthy of God, but a misfortune nevertheless—He was popular. If, more cautious in his ascendancy, He had left the people far from Him, He would be at the present day on an undisputed throne. No one would open his Gospel excepting to bless it, or pronounce his name unless to praise Him. Men would then have excused even his miracles, all of them being stamped with a character of humanity which makes amends for the omnipotence employed, concealing it, in some sort, in the effusion of love †." If you are disposed to doubt the correctness of this passage, hear the wonderful prophetic words of the Greek Anthology: "You have insulted poverty; and if God were upon earth as a poor person, He would Himself have suffered insult." Do you know what St. Francis de Sales says about what you are pleased to call common low people, such as pass you in the street every day, whose priva-

* Q. Review, 3rd series, vol. vi. 192.

† Lettres à un Jeune Homme.

tions and sufferings men and women of the world seldom think much of? He says that they may possibly have a greater claim upon our generosity and affection, supposing us to be Christians and Catholics, than even holy men and women consecrated to religion. Now is not that, for us on the river, and every where else too, a charming thing to hear from such lips? I do not mean that we should be glad to hear disparaged holy men and women. Pray be civil enough not to put such an interpretation on my words. Such is not our meaning; but is it not pleasant to hear that a Catholic bishop, and a saint into the bargain, bids us respect and love and serve poor Harry and Alice, and the rest of them, with all their faults on their back? But what does the saint say? He says that these poor young ladies and gentlemen, in all their tribulations and tatters, and precisely because they are looked down upon by those who call them such, out of a kind of ferocious sport, are the more to be thought of, for the very reason that makes them to be despised; but you shall have it in his own words, which he utters thus, explaining why he prefers what is abject to what is honourable. I must premise that the example he selects is not just what would be pertinent to the letter in London at present, but you will perceive his meaning, which can guide us in all places and ages. "A capuchin, then," he says, "cold and destitute presents himself. Every one honours his torn habit, and has compassion on his sufferings. Presently there comes up some poor young fellow," let us call him a mudlark, "some poor artisan, some poor young woman, already a widow perhaps, or a destitute girl, forsaken by all the world, or worked half to death as being 'befriended,' and one has only frowns and repulses, and contempt too deep to need expression, because poverty in them is abject; and patience, gentleness, unostentatious mortification, and simplicity in seculars, that is, in such low young people as we have been supposing, are abject virtues." Well, now, these are precisely what the holy bishop esteems the most, and he explains it by saying "that what is abject is what we have not ourselves chosen." Harry and Charlotte and Alice have not themselves chosen this state of life, they have fallen into it through their misfortune or their fault, or God placed them in it. "Now," continues the saint, "there is more merit in such suffering, abject as it is,

than in the voluntary hardships of the religious; for many would rather suffer to be scolded and overtasked by a superior in religion, than by a father-in-law in one's own house, or by a master or mistress in a shop where one was bound apprentice. So," he concludes, "that the best abjection is what falls to one's own lot without a vocation, and what is the least agreeable to our natural inclinations, since our choice of a thing takes from us a great part of our virtues*." After hearing this passage read, I hope you will know how to appreciate in future some of our humble friends, and not look on them any longer after the manner of your sensible men or ladies of the world.

But it is not alone necessary for people seeking serene hours, that they should abjure worldliness in respect to having a mind capable of recognizing the virtue and merits of the common people; it is not only required that they should be conscious of the sanction and authority which they have for doing so yielded by the greatest and best examples; it is requisite also that they should practically get rid of its thraldom so far as to be able to understand and feel the kind of enjoyment—sometimes even coveting no other—which is generally within reach of the same class.

Amusements reserved for a few, and guarded from others by protective enactments of any kind, are not the most serene or even the most delightful. As one who knew well the worldly, asks an adept, "What comfortable hour canst thou name, that ever graced me in thy company?" As for the sports themselves so called, it is often well to renounce them for the sake of being more amused and more happy. There is a curious charter of the date of 1199 which throws some light upon the consequences that occasionally followed from the legislative provision for certain pleasures that belonged exclusively to the privileged ranks. It seems that in that year the people of the island of Ré resolved to abandon it in mass, on account of the losses they constantly sustained by the stags and other game protected for the hunting of the Seigneur de Manleon. Of these wild animals it says, "tanta erat earum persecutio, ut homines conspirarent fugere de insula et insulam dimittere desertam." However, with the

* Lett. 107.

good abbot of Notre Dame de Ré at their head, the people petitioned the Seigneur de Manleon to give up his game laws; and he, with the advice of his wife Alice, and of his son Savari, and of his daughter Eustachie, granted their request, adding only a stipulation that he might still reserve a few hares and rabbits *. Now I think we should be all of opinion that this good feudal lord acted very wisely in following the advice of his amiable wife Alice, and of his noble son and charming daughter; and that in all human probability he was able ever after, for the rest of his life, to enjoy more serene hours than would have fallen to his lot had he rejected the prayer of the population with the abbot at their head, and piqued himself on retaining the provisions he was legally entitled to for his select and exclusive amusement.

The advantage of casting off the spirit of worldliness in respect to the enjoyment of life, may be briefly considered from a threefold point of view. First, there is the philosophy of the thing, lately, indeed, glanced at; then the actual, visible result; in fine, the experience or testimony of those who were prompted to do so.

The philosophy of the subject need not detain us long. There can be no serene hour unless there is a heart at rest. "It is the honour of the Christian life," says Lacordaire, "to restrain wants in dilating hearts, just as it is the weakness of doctrines foreign to it to increase necessities in diminishing hearts."

> "——— Willing misery
> Outlives incertain pomp, is crown'd before;
> The one is filling still, never complete;
> The other at high wish."

You have the principle laid down even by the ancient muse:

> "——— Multa petentibus
> Desunt multa; bene est, cui Deus obtulit
> Parca, quod satis est, manu."

In Venice you might have seen it enforced by legislation. Hoarding, and accumulating, and monopolizing of wealth were

* Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes, 4me série, tom. iv. 366.

actually forbidden there, even so late as in the last century; and the President de Brosses mentions an instance as having occurred a short time previous to his visit. The Pisani heiress of 150,000 ducats per annum being counselled by her relations to marry a man of her name as rich as herself, not only did the state refuse to co-operate with their projects, but it obliged her —let us hope that this was with a tacit understanding with the young lady—to marry some one who had nothing. The object was in accordance with these views of happiness, whatever we may think of the means adopted for obtaining it; and certainly those views are the most suitable to our object. For reflect a moment what it is that troubles you. At the bottom it is the wish that your house may be envied. But how many vexations will not that ambition entail on you! The thing that pleases best, if serenity may have a voice, is the "small house" that Alexis describes, introducing a young man trying to make it look very smart before one whom he loves, though, as Eucrates said, exaggerating its condition, "it was so poor a tenement that one who supped in it ought to hold up the house with his left hand, like the Caryatides*." It may be safer than your palace, for all his sneers; and then as for the latter, with its costly train, as Shenstone says,

> "How soon the pageant fades away!
> 'Tis nature only bears perpetual sway.
> We pierce the counterfeit delight,
> Fatigued with splendour's irksome beams;
> Fancy again demands the sight
> Of native groves and wonted streams,
> Pants for the scenes that charmed her youthful eyes,
> Where truth maintains her court, and banishes disguise."

Here, with this confraternity of serene hours, we have not even the young man's fears about appearances, pretending ourselves richer than we are. All the better; we are not heathens, and

> "——— caret invidenda
> Sobrius aula."

"I love that small white house well," says Hood†, speaking of

* Athen. vi.

† Pen and Pencil Pictures.

such a home. If you must hear about grand authorities, and if words mean any thing, you have Wolsey's example to confirm the justice of such views; since we are assured by our catholic poet*—

> "His overthrow heap'd happiness upon him;
> For then, and not till then, he felt himself,
> And found the blessedness of being little."

We conclude, therefore, that the boys with their old classical saws are the philosophers for us, when they say that the commonest of the people can enjoy the pleasures of a king. If you have not a large fortune, says the world, whatever be in your mind, you are plebeian, and unhappy; while boys at play will tell you, on the contrary, that you are a king if you act rightly.

> "Roscia, dic, sodes, melior lex, an puerorum est
> Nænia, quæ regnum recte facientibus offert,
> Et maribus Curiis et decantata Camillis?"

But now, waiving philosophy and its maxims, look to the positive visible results,

> "Les facheux à la fin se sont-ils écartés?
> Je pense qu'il en pleut ici de tous côtés.
> Je les fuis et les trouve."

So it has been with us hitherto; but we cannot finish the lines, and say of ourselves now,

> "———— et pour second martyre,
> Je ne saurais trouver ceux que je désire;"

for here we find the latter filling the fastidious no doubt with disgust and fears, but realizing for themselves and others the sweets of lowliness, and perhaps the advantages of wealth, a charming fancy, and worked out actually sometimes as we witness here†.

So now we have rowed ashore, pulled up our boat, thrown ourselves on the grass, still without our coats. Bid the music be ready, some one cries, they know all their flourishes. You will soon perceive that no one here is fastidious, even in this respect,

* See Shakspeare, par A. F. Rio. † L. Hunt.

or difficult to please. Any thing will do to serve our turn, though it be only Lucy "singing her little song." When the company in the cave described by Cervantes were disposed to celebrate a joyful reconciliation, Escalanta, taking off her shoe, beat time on it like a tambourine. Gananciosa seeing a broom of junk, seized it, and, grating the edges with her nail, produced a sound that harmonized admirably with the shoe, while Monipodio, breaking a plate, formed with two fragments castanets, with which he kept time to the other instruments; the two boys, strangers to the company, wondering all the while at such new inventions, and, above all, the device of the broom striking them as capital. But all were pleased, enchanted. So it is ever. Only in a people's fête do you generally see true contentment and faces full of sunshine. A crowd in drawing-rooms, we are told, "is of all mobs the dullest." As Count Ferneze says in the Case is Altered, "See, see, how like a nest of rooks they stand gaping on one another!" Whereas, here, let me tell you, 'tis no exchange of a new kind of weariness for an old. Here is no pride, no jealousy, no sarcasm, or spiteful triumph,

> "——— and now they talk
> As if they had no eyelids, like things that
> Never slept ———."

Those we left in town, for the most part cattle of the former colour, are sick, they know not where; in spring-time they are subject to the hay disease, perhaps. Well, these have the buttercup fever, and prefer a ramble through the meadows to a banquet in the hall. Like the happy race of winged birds whose laws they eulogize in a way of their own, they must speed "to the bosom of the leaves of the flowery meadows, when the grasshopper, maddened with the noon-tide heat of the sun, utters its shrill melody. They find nothing sweeter than to fly and disport themselves through the groves and caves, and feed upon the vernal buds and the garden herbs of the graces*." Perhaps they are not remarkably well off in the world; they are even straitened at times. Nothing more likely. You see by their

* The Birds.

tastes, that they are, in a way, poets, and that looks as if they were not possessed of great affluence; for among the privileges, ordonnances, and announcements which Apollo sends to Spanish poets, who, in that respect, may stand for all others, we read:

"Item. If a poet says he is poor, he is to be believed on his bare word, without any oath or verification.

"Item. If a poet visits any friend or acquaintance during dinner-time, or before it, and in reply to an invitation to partake of it should say he had dined, even though he should swear it, he is not to be believed, and he must be made to eat perforce, for in this case it will be offering him no violence."

All this holds with regard to those who are most likely to be merry. For who's that singing so tenderly, or whistling so remorselessly as he saunters on? you may be quite sure it is no one who has a balance at a banker's, or who is known to be a studious and finished flâneur. Perhaps it is some one who on Sundays holds familiarity with better clothes; but who now, with person fair and nimble, with skin so wet that unless you have good eyes you'll hardly know it from a shirt, shows confidence in the multitudinous powers with which he thinks nature has invested him, and will feel no blemish, even as Cervantes says, when he has to outface clean linen. The rose is "born in the purple," as well as the Porphyrogenetes of Constantinople. "Yet, I am not of the opinion of Malherbe," says Balzac, "who desired for his perfect world that all its metals should be gold, and all its flowers roses that come crowned into the world. This would be to strip nature of the diversity which adorns it; and I have no reason to wish ill to daisies or violets." Pray don't common people walk hand-in-hand as prettily as any mortals can? "As for beauty, indeed," says Cervantes, "choose people on a Saturday, and not when they are all tricked out on Sunday for church." Well, here you can practise the proverb, and be at no loss either.

Besides the enjoyment arising from such observation, Charles Lamb would bid you note its mental utility; for it brings you acquainted with the every-day human face, and prevents that disgust at common life, that "tædium quotidianarum formarum," which an unrestricted passion for ideal beauties is in danger of producing. Where can all this better be enjoyed than

here at some smiling suburb, in the sequence of degree from high to low throughout?

"Es modicus voti? presso lare? dulcis amicis?"

Then, you may have known the pleasure of which Persius speaks,

"——— plebeiaque prandia noris;"

pleasure which kings, once on a time, and the best society too, till quite lately, did not disdain; for Balzac says that Louis XIII. led a more frugal life than would suit the simplest citizen of a little republic, and the Duc de Saint-Simon describing the table of a certain person of quality, says every thing savoured of frugality, and though there was always a large company of the most eminent persons at dinner, there was always a sufficiency, but never any thing superfluous or exquisite,—"sans rien de récherché*." For the pleasure incident even to our sort of rough unceremonious dinners, hastily provided in some common room near the river, the greatest personages would acknowledge their predilection as for a high enjoyment. We find, for instance, a president of the Parliament of Digeon, looking back at it with regret, when at Venice,—where he remarks no one ever thinks in any of their proud palaces of giving so much as a fowl to a stranger, but only a few slices of melon served up on piles of superb dishes of silver by twenty valets. He says, in writing to a friend at home, "I will own frankly that one of the most disagreeable things of my travels is the having my eyes satisfied and my heart wearied, and the not having any of my good old comrades, with elbows on the table," and as we from the river would say, in their shirt sleeves, talking away about things worth more than all the Piazza of St. Mark. We find the Count de Maistre, in his letters recently published, expressing the same impressions. "I never see myself," he writes from St. Petersburg, to one of his old friends in Switzerland, "grandly arrayed amidst all this Asiatic pomp without thinking of my blue socks, and going on foot to see you at Lausanne. When I have tired my horses

* Tom. i. 292.

parading in these long streets, what I want is to be able to find friendship in slippers, and to talk in accordance with it—'raisonner pantoufle;' it is to have my elbows on the table, and think aloud; it is to have two things which are ever remembered,—the sunshine and one's companions." You who participate in these tastes are able to relish "the hum of bees, and the cooing of the ring-doves, and a garden of a few feet square;" and since, as the President de Brosses says, it is necessary to mention such things, having learned from his friend the Père Labat that one should always describe what one eats, and that persons of a proper turn of mind pay more attention to this article whenever they read a narrative than to any other, "a board spread with tea-things, and fresh eggs, and new bread and butter, and ignoble shrimps,"—though I know not why Mr. Dickens calls so the food of Hecate *,—and some one singing to a guitar, perhaps, and, at all events, rest upon the green plot, which last privilege the poet does not forget, as in the well-known lines,

"——— Somnus agrestium
Lenis virorum non humiles domos
Fastidit, umbrosamque ripam,
Non Zephyris agitata Tempe."

Supposing the worst with respect to your financial state, you would be still an object of envy to the old dramatist who says, "A crumb for thy supper, a hand for thy cup, and thy clothes for sheets,—then art thou in a state of life which philosophers commend," for "Natura paucis contenta." Yes, there are advantages in regard to serenity attached to this way of enjoying oneself with a light skiff, and a rude bench, and a public garden, thrown among our common brothers and sisters,—advantages, and even exemptions, which do not belong to what the poet calls "divitias operosiores." In some sort it jumps with some men's humour as well as waiting in the court, I can tell you.

"Cellars and granaries in vain we fill
With all the bounteous summer's store;
If the mind thirst and hunger still,
The poor rich man's emphatically poor."

* Athen. viii.

Besides, here one need wear no mask; here one takes a free air-bath, as Montalembert might say; here one has liberty and independence, practising the precept,

> "Respue quod non es; tollat sua munera cerdo;
> Tecum habita, et noris quam sit tibi curta supellex *."

And, moreover, observe this, you man of great revenue, there is nothing in all that you see here that you can order; it will not be commanded. Nothing here is marketable.

> "Ha! ha!
> What things are these, my lord?
> Will money buy them?"

Talk of the world indeed! A foutra for the world, and worldlings base! Go to; I'll no more of it, it turns us to stone. I say we will have no more of it. "Why the world and the devil," as Fenelon says, "are tame and sprightless temptations, poor traffic." The world has what the Duc de Saint-Simon calls "ces tristes réjouissances de commande," fêtes that have an ulterior object, that no one feels at the time livelier for. Here, on the contrary, are golden joys; here is spontaneous gaiety, with nothing to trouble it. Here are sunny beams, glistening leaves, warbling birds, sparkling waves, the life-like speed of the little boat, that world of cool green weeds, the musical chime of oars,—nothing stuck up but the distant stately swans. "What are you thinking of?" asked a young excursionist of his companion on an occasion of this kind. "Thinking!" she replied; "I was not thinking." "What then?" "I don't know; feeling, I suppose †."

Richard of St. Victor says that we should never seek delights from the world or accept the slavery of its gifts ‡. But observe, in uttering this caveat, he could not have meant what is around us in such a place as this; for whoever sits in this green plot or garden, where every common lad and waterman may loiter as well as himself, can enjoy a serene hour without asking the

* Pers. iv.

† Sir E. B. Lytton, Ten Thousand a Year; or, What will he do with it?

‡ Annot. Myst. in Ps. xxviii.

world to give it him. It is God who gives it to him. In order to possess it one has not to be a rich man, like old Laches in the comedy, congratulating himself on his country-house being so near at hand that no weariness, either of country or of town, ever takes possession of him, being able, when satiety begins to come on, to change his locality. In order to possess things like him, Heaven only knows what has to be sacrificed. Sometimes conscience comes off second best. But here, on the contrary, any one, without being indebted for it to the world, or paying its price, may, as Cowper says,

> "Call the delightful scen'ry all his own.
> His are the gardens, and the bowers his,
> And the resplendent river; his t'enjoy
> With a propriety that none can feel
> But who with filial confidence inspired
> Can lift to Heav'n an unpresumptuous eye,
> And smiling say, My Father gives them all."

There are many who can truly say with a celebrated Frenchwoman, "This fictitious possession suffices for me. The real possession of things has never given me pleasure. I never envy those who have palaces of their own, and carriages, and jewels, and even pictures of their own; and yet I love to walk through a great palace, to see pass an elegant equipage, to examine well-executed works of jewelry and art, but I have never felt the want of saying, This is mine; and I cannot even comprehend how this want should exist. 'To see is to have,' says a sonneteer, 'Voir c'est avoir.' I love," she continues, "with passion all that is beautiful; but I should not love it the more for the reason that it belonged to me personally. I believe, too, that the possession and use of many precious things which I admire, without possessing or using them, have a tendency to hamper, to confine, to weary, to make people grow old prematurely. At all events, they would not prove agreeable to myself, so that I feel on the whole that I was not born to be a rich proprietor, and that I could live as happily in a thatched cottage as in an Italian villa." I lately saw a pleasant instance in a small way of understanding this philosophy in France. To the west of the glorious old city of Rouen, just after passing the ancient Priory

of St. Gervais, where William the Conqueror died, and where in a venerable crypt you see the altar on which St. Mellon said mass and the tomb which contained his bones before the invasion of the Normans and their consequent removal to Poissy, on the side of the mountain, and at a spot commanding a delightful view over the Seine, of which you can trace the winding for many a league, there stands a villa surrounded with walls encompassing charming pleasure-grounds, of which you catch a glimpse through an iron gate where the western wall necessarily shuts out the view from those who are within it. Very wisely, therefore, for himself, even supposing that it was not done through munificent kindness to strangers, the proprietor has placed here carved stone seats, not within his own private grounds, but on the outside of the enclosure along the public lane, where the first comer can enjoy the setting sun and that lovely landscape as well as himself. I wonder when will the owner of a splendid villa in England show equal discernment. However, to return to our English public grounds, which are often, it must be owned, delightful, and where every common wight like myself is welcome. In the sense of the world there is nothing of one's own here; it is all enjoyed in common by any one that pleases; and there, on the sunny bench between the trees loaded with fruit-blossoms, such as a very great artist has of late very wisely introduced into his picture of a scene of this kind, and the shining river in which some cows are watering, as if waiting for a Cuyp to copy them, he finds verified the heavenly words, "gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis." Richard of St. Victor, at all events, does not talk of the sombre light which shines on miserable mortals, neither by the way, let us remark, does he confirm the testimony of an illustrious novelist who says that the mediæval Christianity did not rejoice in the daylight; but he exclaims, as if beholding with us now this luminous air, "What will be the light that will be in common to us and angels when we have such a light here in common with beasts*!"

Who can speak enough of this content?

"It stops us here; it is too much of joy."

* Rich. S. Vict. Benj. Minor, c. 22.

But, master, let me add, says our honest fisherman, that while you were absent from me I sat down under a willow-tree by the water side, and considered what you had told me of the owner of that pleasant meadow,—that he had a plentiful estate, and not a heart to think so; that he had at this time many law-suits depending, and that they both damped his mirth and took up so much of his time and thoughts, that he had not leisure to take the sweet content which I, who pretended to no title to them, took in his fields; for I could there sit quietly, and, looking on the water, see the fish sport themselves in the silver stream; looking on the hills, I could behold them spotted with woods and groves; looking down the meadows, could see here a boy gathering lilies and lady-smocks, and there a girl cropping culverkeys and cowslips, all to make garlands suitable to this present month of May. I say, as I thus sat, joying in my own happy condition or pitying this poor rich man that owned all these groves and meadows, I did thankfully remember that the meek possess the earth, that they enjoy what others possess and enjoy not, for it is such people only who can say with the poet,

> "Hail, blest estate of lowliness!
> Happy enjoyments of such minds,
> As rich in self-contentedness,
> Can, like the reeds in roughest winds,
> By yielding make that blow but small,
> At which proud oaks and cedars fall."

We are led thus to our third and last consideration; we have to hear the testimony of those who have sought and realized for themselves these pleasures.

Now, from age to age, although every thing else human may be thought to change with the progress of society, this testimony does not vary. It is still the voice of the old poet saying of life where worldliness is excluded,

> "———————— Hæc est
> Vita solutorum misera ambitione gravique.
> His me consolor, victurus suavius, ac si
> Quæstor avus, pater atque meus, patruusque fuissent."

There is at the present day to be found even the man who can repeat his words with a personal reference, and say,

> "——————— nil cupientium
> Nudus castra peto; et transfuga divitum
> Partes linquere gestio."

The river and the groves can sometimes witness, in fact, conversions of this remarkable kind, when we might hear words like those of Menelaus, "I have experienced what was meet; I have changed, to regard him or her with favour who is sprung from a common source. Such changes belong not to a bad man, to follow the best always." It is even so, and he is blessed for coming to such a resolution. He finds verified around him the truth of the old lines, that

> "——————— humble valleys thrive with
> Their bosoms full of flowers, when the hills melt
> With lightning and rough anger of the clouds."

We may say of him in the words of Cowley,

> "So ever thus let him remain
> As man in paradise did reign,
> When perfect love did so agree
> With innocence and poverty."

Not alone then love, as some one says, but the simple desire of serene hours, is the sleep of ambition. But perhaps, exclaims some officious friend or other, if you all sleep like this, pray who is to fill the saloons of Belgravia, or the Ring in the park? who the House of Commons, the House Committees, the ministry, the clubs, the law courts, the exchange, the bench, the stations, the councils, the public offices, the West-end academies, and all the social heights here below? "You and yours, Monsieur Pluche!" replies Jules Janin. Unintermitted activity, thirst for advancement, ambition, firm will, vast reputation, we leave to you absolutely all this grandeur! Only leave us, ye lovers of Morning Post celebrity, of noise and splendid dissipation, our dear constancy, our ancient respect, our humble thought, with our antique studies and our fresh and harmless leisure. O Divine Providence! there are no little pleasures here below; or rather, friend, the more your little pleasure or happiness is

humble and hidden, the more is it truly a great pleasure, a great happiness.

In order to bring the talk of this day's expedition to a proper close, let us take a general glance at the character of those men who, led by natural disposition, or by experience and reflection, arriving at this ancient, poetic, juvenile, classical, and no less thoroughly Christian appreciation of worldliness, constitute the sort of companions that are proper for an excursion of the kind that we are engaged in. Every one has, or has had, his troubles in this world, and we have been searching for what we wanted to find. Well, here we need search no longer; it is found.

Already, even without hearing them give this express and personal evidence, we can form some idea of the general character, as opposed to worldliness, which is required for the occasion. We have to-day been shown, I think, something far better than slow, narrow-minded, old-fashioned pride in any of its forms, though we sought not to contrast it even with "that nature which constitutes the heroic temperament." It was enough for us to find that disposition which was ascribed to a young prince, born for a throne, by his illustrious grandmother, herself a queen, who, conversing with friends, summed up her enthusiastic praises of him by saying, "It's a good boy,—'c'est un honnête garçon,'"—unobtrusive, and yet fully adequate mode of qualifying one who was introduced as the main character upon whom was transferred the highest interests; just in the same manner as Shakspeare makes Horatio call attention for the first time to the hero of his masterpiece by saying,

> "Let us impart what we have seen to-night
> Unto young Hamlet."

"Young Hamlet," nothing more.

The disposition required is that of a man or woman capable of serene enjoyment, and that, too, without having ever read Seneca, one who possesses a free mind,

> "———— et abstinens
> Ducentis ad se cuncta pecuniæ;"

one, perhaps, like that young swain, as Corin says, "who little cares for buying any thing," who does not come to us like a

snail carrying his house on his head, who, if enticed by any man within the fatal circle to step across the line, and practise any of its interior tricks, in order thereby to make himself master of all that a worldly imagination can embrace, would scorn his offer,

> "And tell him he were poorer in his soul
> Than he that feeds i' the hospital;"

who if taunted with the littleness of his condition, would reply with the poet,

> "Sit mihi quod nunc est, etiam minus; ut mihi vivam
> Quod superest ævi."

These are the persons who can be serene; for, as Richard of St. Victor says, "when you begin neither to desire the prosperity of your worldly things nor to fear their adversity, what will there be left that can disturb your mind*?"

> "Strenua nos exercet inertia: navibus atque
> Quadrigis petimus bene vivere. Quod petis hic est."

It is habits of this kind which form the sort of persons that are wanted for such occasions; men and women accustomed to be content with little, and to retain in their desires the old moderation, as when Pliny, though a pagan, writing to Bebius, can praise a small place of retreat for the very reason of its being small, and on that account extremely suitable to the taste and desires of his friend Tranquillus. "The convenient distance," he says, "from Rome, the goodness of the roads, the smallness of the building, and the very few acres of land around it, which are just enough to amuse but not to employ him, all make it the very thing for him. To a man of his turn of mind it is sufficient if he have but a little spot like this to relieve the spirits and divert the eye, where he may saunter round it, traverse his single walk, grow familiar with his two or three vines, and count his little plantations." But it is Balzac above all who does justice to the subject in describing his own serene hours, seeming to have felt like Cowley when the poet said,—

* De Exterminatione Mali, c. 7.

"Well, then, I now do plainly see,
This busy world and I shall ne'er agree:
Ah! yet, ere I descend to the grave,
May I a small house and small garden have!
And a few friends, and many books, both true,
Both wise, and both delightful too!"

"I have been," he says, "a long time in the world, but I only lived during the last autumn; and since I cannot bring back those happy days which were so dear to me, I try to recover them by memory and by discourse. The liberty which I enjoyed, the air which I breathed, and the smiling face of the country, still rich in fruits and presents, gave me such sweet and tranquil thoughts, that, without being excited, I had all the pleasures of joy. The importunate mental diseases which I had been surrounded with did not approach this favoured spot. I did not know what it was to fear or to wish for any thing. All my passions were at rest, and those of others did not come near me. The envy and hatred which so cruelly fastened on the little shadow of good which some persons thought they could detect among my defects, attacking me where I was not, did me no harm that I could feel; and the objects present before me so filled my mind, and effaced the impressions of the past, that, as they left no place for apprehensions of the future, there was nothing disagreeable to haunt my memory. In this state, so different from the tumult I had just left, and under the serenity of such a benign climate, I felt as if I was being born afresh, and assisting at the renewal of all things. The afternoons were spent in conversation, from which we excluded state affairs, polemical debates, and questions of philosophy. We did not dispute about the pope being above the council, or the council above the pope; we did not trouble ourselves with the reformation of kingdoms or changes of government; we spoke about our melons and corn, and the prospects of the vintage. Then we used to disperse, one to the wood, another to the garden, a third to a gallery filled with maps and pictures; and about sunset, the heat being now supportable, I used to wander down a long avenue that led me to the river; there, not being able to imitate Scipio and Lælius counting the waves and gathering shells, I enjoyed the pleasure of watching the reflexion of ob-

jects in the water, and the different things that floated down. And this was my amusement till the setting of the sun, when I hastened to the meadows to view at my ease that rich effusion of colours which its decline causes; and then this delightful spectacle used to detain me out of doors till night had set in, for I could not bring myself to lose any part of such delicious days, of which I knew the season could not be long, and which, in proportion as they diminished, became to me only the more precious*." De Quincey even is of opinion that merely a watching of the sky would be an appropriate exercise after such a discussion as we have been engaged in; for he remarks that the poet speaks of these grand pageants as being

> "Meek nature's evening comment on the shows,
> And all the fuming vanities of earth."

"Yes," he adds, "that is the secret moral whispered to the mind. These mimicries express the laughter which is in heaven at earthly pomps. Frail and vapoury are the glories of man, even as the visionary parodies of those glories are frail; even as the scenical copies of these glories are frail, which nature weaves in clouds."

We see then what sort of persons there are to keep us in countenance when we recommend such excursions, and seek to participate, without deeming it a condescension, in the taste which leads our careless rowers and saunterers, flying from worldliness, in quest of a serene hour, to a retreat beyond all groves and gardens. There are men in truth at all times, from every rank of society, and of every age, whose natures, however in other respects faulty, are at least too noble for what is called the world; men who in all ages have "doff'd the world aside and bid it pass;" who are too lofty, as some one says, "in their antique mould, too tender in their depths of unsuspected sweetness," to be capable of entering into affinity with it; men who suffer from it though, and even sometimes wear its livery, like the Duc de Chevreuse, who, for all that, had it in such aversion that, as the Duc de Saint-Simon tells us, the generality of the court knew nothing of the pleasures with which he used to

* Balzac, Prologue to the Prince.

regale his intimate friends in his gardens of Dampièrre, where he so loved to amuse himself with them *. Such men, however, are detected from time to time going forth with some companion stealthily into the fields, and by the banks of rivers, and saying, as Jaques says to Orlando, "Will you sit down with me? and we two will rail against our mistress the world, and all our misery." Adding perhaps with St. Augustine, "Quæ est illa animarum insania, acquirere aurum, et perdere cœlum?" Or, what is more to the point, on such occasions, saying with a celebrated Frenchwoman, who participates in their feeling, "I am forced to confess, now that I know the obstinacy of classes, that the faults of individuals seem to me to be not their own, but to belong wholly to the aggregate medium amidst which they live, and from which, in spite of their naturally noble hearts and high intelligences, they have never been able entirely to disengage themselves." It is an old complaint this; for the world has had a long reign of it, and the victims to its despotism, in every age, have been many. Happy those who make use of such moments of exemption to adopt the resolution of the great and good, saying, "Dirumpamus vincula eorum, et projiciamus a nobis jugum ipsorum,"—let us burst their chains and throw off their yoke. "By chains," says Richard of St. Victor, commenting on the words, "we are hindered; by a yoke we are compelled to work against our will; two great evils, to be hindered from good, and to be forcibly occupied with evil †." But, as Lacordaire says, generous souls easily pass beyond limits. They aspire to descend, not from weariness, but through a taste for true elevation, which is only found in the sacrifice of self.

> "Lovely, lasting peace, appear;
> This world itself, if thou art here,
> Is once again with Eden blest,
> And man contains it in his breast."

Like Charles the Fifth without his years and infirmities, like Tasso without his troubles and perplexities, they want to realize this aspiration; they want a sort of retirement from the world; not indeed for the rest of their lives, but for a day or two once

* Tom. x. 272. † Adnot. in Psal. ii.

a month, or half a day; enjoyment which they hope to take from time to time at intervals, though perhaps such another evening or such another hour as is granted them then to enjoy, may never come to them again. For the moment however, at least, they are free, perhaps even as Balzac said of Louis XIII., so free that, with some tender and sensitive companion, they are already viewing the earth as one looks at it from heaven.

> "Go search among your idle dreams,
> Your busy or your vain extremes;
> And find a life of equal bliss,
> Or own the next begun in this."

But it seems to me the ramble has been sufficiently protracted. As Hastings says,

> "We are time's subjects, and time bids be gone."

Let us get home how we can; a fierce stream has been against us all the day, and, sooth to say, it was rather heavy work trying to pull against it.

> "Non più, signor, non più di questo canto
> Ch' io già son stanco, e vo posarmi al quanto *."

We have had a long discussion; all very well considering; however, let us hear no more of that matter. The tide is at last favourable; take the sculls, it is your turn now. I predict that our next expedition will be pleasanter:

μῦθοι δὲ καὶ ἠῶθέν περ ἔσονται.

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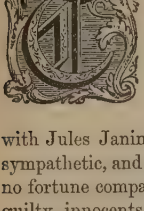
* Orlando.

CHAPTER IX.



HERE is no want of provision near at hand on our river's banks for honest recreation and the enjoyment of a serene hour, if, as we said at our last meeting, people will only condescend to avail themselves of it. But that is, of course, a rather bold hypothesis; for it is not every one who is ready to agree with Jules Janin, that the best man and woman is the most sympathetic, and that there is no glory equal to that disposition, no fortune comparable to it, whatever may be advanced by those guilty innocents, who have neither faults nor virtues. Well, among favourable sites, where there is something better for us than that rain-water to which he says these people are reduced, the difficulty is only in the choice. There is Kew-green, for example, with its hospitable tenements, having their little strips of gardens running down to the barge-walk. There, if the season should be far advanced and growing cold, you can, on leaving your boat, have dinner in a large and rather antique-looking room, commanding a view across the river, which, being all to yourselves at that season, may remind you perhaps of happy travelling and resting in a French hotel, with other friends all around you. Where are some of them now? Well, that's neither here nor there. But on a bright summer's afternoon there's nothing like the grass below next the river and the honeysuckle arbours, where you can see such a motley throng of happy persons taking their tea or their pot of ale in the little cozy bowers on each side of the garden, while others are stretched out on the green turf, in a sort of ecstasy at hearing some one playing a guitar, while some female voice sings to it. Indeed, most people's eyes on such occasions glisten as if they were remembering a time when, to some other eyes in a less frequented spot, they could have said, in their ocular language, which, like music, can express what words are powerless to convey,

"Peace, Chloris, peace, or singing die,
That together you and I
To Heaven may go;
For all we know
Of what the blessed do above
Is, that they sing, and that they love."

At present, to be sure, there is no one formally ready for such confessions. Every one seems at the top of his own tree, as if he had nothing more to wish for.

"They are all crowned,
The antidote content is only theirs,
And unto that such full delights are known,
That they conceive the kingdom is their own."

Talk of classical scenes, indeed! Would you be more pleased to see before you the proud suitors of Penelope, delighting their mind with a game of draughts before the door, sitting—nasty wretches!—on the skins of pilfered oxen, which they themselves had killed? These good people before us, at all events, though there were fifty butcher-boys amongst them in disguise, and not as blue as March violets,—a familiar hypothesis which need not give you such mortal offence, when you remember that an illustrious family of Constantinople did not disdain the surname of Χοιροσφάκτης *,—would never seem, with overbearing insolence, to feast through either the house or garden. Perhaps their worst offence is to hold with honest Izaak Walton, that

"'Tis merry in hall, when men sing all."

Really, in these joyous little dramas of common, or, if you will, of vulgar life, which seem in fact, in spite of the pipe and ale, to savour somewhat of the old Italian life, and with every thing smiling round you thus, the serenity is more than superficial; and one can easily understand a man saying, with Sir William Temple, that "whoever find themselves wholly insensible to these charms, would do well to keep their own counsel, for fear of reproaching their own temper, and bringing the goodness of their natures, if not of their understandings, into

* Mém. de l'Acad. tom. 34, p. 225.

question. It may be thought," he adds, "at least an ill sign, since some of the Fathers went so far as to esteem the love of music a sign of predestination, as a thing divine and reserved for the felicities of heaven itself. Happy," he concludes, "those who content themselves with such entertainments, or any other so easy and so innocent, and do not trouble the world or other men because they cannot be quiet themselves, though nobody hurts them*!" Well, for the moment, all of us here can quite agree with him. The only interruption—and it is a pleasant one—is occasioned from time to time by a sudden invasion from a thirsty crew of lads just landed, who stop for a few minutes to refresh, and then, after discharging a few innocent jests with the players of bowls and the musicians, are off to their boat singing merrily, and away again. Well, joy go with them for all their volleys, and may it also leave a little envoy behind it, to remain with us, who are not yet disposed to follow them back to town. What sport shall we devise here in this garden to drive away the heavy thought of care?

There is hope to-day that we shall not be deemed unreasonable or extravagant when we propose to this end for subject of our thoughts on this occasion

> "Society, Friendship, and Love,
> Divinely bestow'd upon man,"

or the necessity of having, in order to qualify any one for such intervals, a loveable, friendly, sociable, benevolent, and charitable turn of mind; a full compliance with the law of such affections being in fact, as an old writer proves, in a very grave and solemn discourse on love, to be the perfection and happiness both of the human race and of the whole rational creation, of which we witness at present only a part.

Without seeing, indeed, manifested around us, in some degree or other, the operation of this law, we can seldom effect a start on any of our expeditions; for, somehow or other, it is difficult on these occasions to conceal one's project from the passers-by. Intense energy, eager and infinite hope, will betray themselves in the face, in the gait, in the very movement of the arms and shoulders. Do what you will to put on an every-day look, your

* Miscel. p. 11.

London boys can read you through and through the first step you make from your door; they will tell each other all about what you are going out for the day to enjoy; and certainly, while they chatter and point with their fingers, it is not envious eyes that are fixed on you, but rather such as evince a most friendly, unselfish, and genial congratulation. Consequently it is hard to set out in very bad humour with those you leave behind you, or indeed with any portion of mankind whose memory is likely to occur to you on such auspicious occasions. To realize a few serene hours there is either the merry company of several persons, requiring, if on the river, the randan, four, six, or eight-oar, and even sometimes the pleasure-boat, with cushions and a rail round the seats, there being no need to speak here of what can be seen from time to time even on the Thames—your golden barge, recalling Thalamegus, the carrier of his bed-chamber, which Philopator built for the river Nile, arguing a different race of excursionists—or the retiring and somewhat pensive party of only two or three, for whom, under similar circumstances, the funny, skiff, or light wherry is provided. For we need not speak of your unsociable outrigger, suiting a kind of water-hermit, who consults merely himself, and who, left in this way, has only to sit and think, think, till one might suppose he must feel himself—to use one of a merry author's similitudes—as lonesome as a kitten in a washhouse copper, with the lid on. We must consider in succession, and beginning with the dual number, what is required by both occasions, according as the excursionists are scarce or plentiful.

All mankind, an old writer says, live in romance. At least the Thames will occasionally waft echoes that respond to this sentence. "Beautiful river! which might furnish the English tale-teller with legends wild as those culled on shores licked by Hydaspes, and sweet as those which Cephisus ever blended with the songs of nightingales and the breath of violets*!" So, while the large merry company row or saunter on in troops, there will be apart, as the same great writer says, "loves and youths weaving their warm eternal idyl on the sunny lawns by the gliding river," and singing verses such as those of Gay:

* P. Caxton.

"The flocks shall leave the mountains,
The woods the turtle-dove,
The nymphs forsake the fountains,
Ere I forsake my love.
Not showers to larks so pleasing,
Nor sunshine to the bee,
Not sleep to toil so easing,
As those dear smiles to me."

I am afraid that people loving truth are often great story-tellers, in professing to be guided by a purely artistic taste for this thing or that, when they decide on what they wish to do in order to spend a pleasant day; for the little secret fact is, that it is sometimes to one face present or absent, that every spot and every kind of amusement owes its fascination. That locality, that diversion surpasses every thing else, simply because some one or other is there, or has been there, is taking that recreation, or has been seen taking it. After all, if one may dare to say so, it used not to be esteemed a deadly matter, or a thing religiously injurious either for men like your true Christian knights of old, to have "une dame de leurs pensées*." It may be believed that there was a great deal of propriety and a great deal of good in the custom. Be that, however, as it may, certainly each man who wants to find a true poet's corner, need only visit his own heart,

"—— Sanctosque recessus mentis †."

There he finds, in many cases,

"—— the earliest dawn of love
Still present with him, and a form of grace
Whose beauty holds him ever in its thrall."

Papon, in his general history of Provence, after giving a Greek inscription, found at Bagarris, a little village near Bourguet, which contains these words—

D. M.
ΣΩΜΑΤΑ ΜΕΝ ΔΥΟ
ΨΥΧΗ ΔΕ ΜΙΑ,

* Le Président Rolland, Récherches sur les Cours d'Amour.
† Pers.

says coolly and half doubtingly, with a certain sneer, without being in the least moved by them, it was no doubt on the grave of two young married persons or of two lovers, since it is only of this kind of people one could think of affirming that the same soul was in two bodies. The Thames however, as well as the Rhone, would give its testimony any day to the possibility and reality of the fact adverted to on that old tomb. Since, putting ourselves aside, we have left behind vicious and worldly people, one may venture to say, without fearing to provoke a censure, that really it seems—for what's the use of affecting the air of mere animals, and of pretending frivolity?—as if there were, in this poor human nature of ours, always a disposition to look back, as it were, on the garden of Eden, and on fresh, innocent, earnest creatures walking in it serene with God. What on earth would you have? We were made and intended to be such. So we hear sung the old lines, let who will fleer and jest,

> "Where the light cannot pierce, in a grove of tall trees,
> With my fair one as blooming as May,
> Undisturb'd by all sound but the sighs of the breeze,
> Let me pass the hot noon of the day."

All love is lunatic, so says some one. Be that as it may, it again is certain that it must be a very providential charm which induces some to make the kind of unconscious sacrifices which we see them offer to the great elementary laws of society; for I believe that without it every one would be for repeating Othello's words and saying, that if it were not for love,

> "He would not his unhoused free condition
> Put into circumscription and confine
> For the sea's worth."

But so it is; the freest ranger of the hills, and dales, and rivers, with a jovial crew, will contract a state of mind desperately antagonistic to roaming much about, as well as to all other enjoyment that delights others. Like the Oxonian, author of a little tour in Ireland, he will on seeing some face or other that nobody else thinks about, experience that sort of emotion which Sydney Smith used to say the late Bishop of London rejoiced

to contemplate in his clergy, "a kind of drop-down-deadness." As when old Chaucer sung,

> "Your two eyn will sle me sodenly,
> I may the power of them not sustene,
> So wendeth it thorowout my herte kene."

So, in a general way, there will be no more riding out with many, or rowing out with many, or walking out with many, to enjoy a serene hour; though you may not hear him actually expressing a complaint after the manner of the old ballad,

> "Sweet Love, begon a while,
> Thou seest my heaviness:
> Beautie is borne but to beguyle
> My harte of happiness."

Go forth he will no doubt, as we are supposing, but his general friends won't be the wiser for it; the merriest, jolliest fellowships are broken up, and men, even in a commercial country, are at cost to be virtuous, and turn others into an idea; they will, as is said so humorously in the song, "throw themselves away." Oh, yes, if they can but please some, "they'll chuck themselves away!" and we see in various forms, from a touch of the same wand, miracles as Jacinta exclaims; for there is no other name to give to such operations, even without taking into consideration that, as an illustrious author says, "love can sometimes impart to us the virtues which religion herself prescribes, and cause an involuntary accomplishment of what duty orders, in renouncing selfishness and despising," as we remarked on our last voyage, "what vanity desires, making the whole place of the interior, as it were, clear for later inspirations, when piety may formally and absolutely succeed to love, according to the most common history of the human heart." Well, we are now concerned only with that first incipient state of which mortals are the object. So here, even in the open air and away from home, all is stillness and retreat, to content a Carthusian, in accordance with what the poet says,

> "Who love would seek,
> Let him love evermore
> And seldom speak;

For in love's domain
Silence must reign,
Or it brings the heart
Smart
And pain."

"Omnia vincit Amor; et nos cedamus Amori."

Love under all forms governs our whole life; love filial, love fraternal, love conjugal, love paternal or maternal, friendship, benevolence, charity, love is every where. It is our life even. So here at last we have a secure monarchy, the anointed sovereign, sole imperator, whose colours all must wear; for, as a great author says, "there is no revolution possible in woman's kingdom, to overthrow her all-powerful, dreadful little might. There is no '89 for her throne, and I defy you to escape from that consequence. You are men of the nineteenth century, of course. It matters not. There at least, with all loiterers and malcontents, you are fixed." And, observe now how love's dominion is every where. Children, goodman Gravity, will form no exception. They are like lovers; they watch minutes like astronomers; they have no other but a woman's reason, too; I think him so, because I think him so; they are, in spite of you, the apples of each other's eyes, the delight, the existence of each other. Truly the bearers of presents among them, such as they are, form whole regiments. Then there's such whispering, and chattering, and scribbling on scraps of paper about loves, and tenderness, and mirth, and expeditions, and sending to and fro of such muck, with words like Juliet's, "I must hear from thee every day in the hour, for in a minute there are many days," that the patience of observers is exhausted, blessing the boys and wishing them far away; and then the restrained sorrow and wretchedness caused at the bare mention of such things associated with severance, and destruction, and a downfall, seems comic to those who know the threats were only feigned. Now what is all such friendship, pray, but a sort of romance? Why, it often exists in the family in the form of filial love. If you doubt it, read the letters of that young Maurice from Passy to his mother, when she was imprisoned by the Revolutionary government in the convent of the English nuns in the Rue des

Fossés, appointing the precise moment when they were both to look at the dome of St. Geneviève. Of course its ultimate direction is less immaterial. But even then the most innocent natures are not exempt from its power in an altered form. "Poets," says Cowley, "are scarce thought freemen of their company without paying some duties of this kind, and obliging themselves to be true to affection. Neither," he adds, "would I here be misunderstood, as if I affected so much gravity as to be ashamed to be thought really in love. On the contrary, I cannot have a good opinion of any man who is not at least capable of being so." But the fact is, the sadder a man is, the more likely is it that he is composed of the stuff of which lovers are made; for as a celebrated woman says, "beings who appear cold and are only timid, when they dare to love, adore." But what of this? Are we not all in love? Of course there is to be met here and there the man animated by the passion for glory, which is too vast to be satisfied by any one object. There is besides the mere egotist, who merits to hear the taunt of the witty damsel in the Palmerin of England, which some perhaps would now mistake for a compliment, "My advice to you is, that when in any danger you should commend yourself to yourself, and look to nothing but to the praise bestowed by yourself on yourself, having no one to blame when fortune is against you but yourself." A knight of this kind can be found any day in real life, of whom we may say with strict truth,

"Nec amans quemquam nec amatus ab ullo."

A "muff" like this might say with Fungoso, seeing Fastidious Brisk, "O an I might have but my wish, I'd ask no more of heaven now, but such a suit, such a hat, such a band, such a doublet, such a hose, such a boot."

"There be those men in love with their own clothes,
Their wits, their follies, their estates, themselves."

"Those men," does he say? Alack! there is one at your elbow, fit to figure in the category, at least during certain intervals, when employed upon this very log-book of our own; for now when writing it, like the enamoured Beatrice, he'll be up twenty

times a night, and there will he sit in his shirt till he has writ a sheet of paper. Your author tells you all. But though he were to be himself some days excluded for it, such company will not be fitting. Without being poets, it is certain that to brighten up life,

"To make one sweet, detaining hour,"

nothing is more efficacious than friendship of this kind—the desire and presence of a congenial mind—raised to the power of romance. Indeed, if you will believe Vauvenargues, it creates serene hours naturally of itself, and that too beyond the sphere of its first and immediate influence; for after describing the previous ill-humour and misanthropy of one to whom later it was vouchsafed, he proceeds to show its effects in these terms: "He is no longer now either timid or disquieted, vain or jealous. He has no longer any enemies; he hates no one; he envies no one. One cannot describe his joy, his transports, his unconnected but ever cheerful conversation, his silence and his distractions. All those who depend on him find themselves participating in his happiness. Those who have neglected his orders find him on their return neither severe nor impatient; he only says that they were quite right to amuse themselves, and that he would be sorry to spoil the joy of any one. The very beggars in the street can perceive the change wrought in him *." Nor is it alone the virtuous and amiable moralist who takes this view of the matter. We find it alluded to at least by the ancient theologians, in a manner that indicates their sympathy. "Between the delights of charity," says Richard of St. Victor, "and those of wisdom there is this difference, that the latter can be drawn from one's own heart, whereas the former are drawn from the heart of another. For he who loves and desires to be loved is not so much delighted as anxious, if he does not draw the sweetness of love from the heart of the person he loves. But the delights of wisdom give greatest pleasure when they are derived from one's own heart. Wisdom can exist, therefore, in singularity of person; but the completion of felicity cannot exist without plurality of persons †." Experience proves all

* Caractères.

† De Trinitate, lib. iii. c. 16.

this, and more besides. "There be plenty of good fellows in the world, an a man could light on them," as somebody says; and if he don't light on them, it may be his own fault; but still, nevertheless, we must repeat it, there are those who, sooner or later, leave merry companions and the best fellows in all the world, and who single out some one or other who has quite a different sort of recommendation, to whom, for all that, they say with great truthfulness,

"———— Otium
Non dulce, ni tecum simul;"

or as, when praising such a ramble as one of ours, adding,

"Excepto, quod non simul esses, cætera lætus;"

or, as Cowley says,

"———— I feel lost
If aught get place in my remembrance
Without some badge of thy resemblance,
So that thy parts become to me
A kind of art of memory."

In short, if one might venture to speak one's opinion, since, as old ballads say,

"You beauteous ladyes, great and small,
I write unto you one and all,"

it is nothing but what is commemorated in the ancient song about liking to walk abroad dressed in one's best, et cetera, though possibly, as in that instance, it were to be only with a certain angel most times as near her native skies as possible, in some garret nine stories high. Desperate condition! but who can help it?

"Other pleasures give them pain,
Lovers all but love disdain."

"We are often induced," says Johnson, from whose grave muse the last lines are borrowed, "by accidental endearments to love those whom we have not learned to esteem, and by great evidences of virtue to esteem those whom we cannot love. Friendship requires that its candidates should not only gain the judg-

ment, but attract the affections; that they should not only be firm in the day of distress, but gay in the hour of jollity, pleasing in familiar life; and that their presence should give cheerfulness." Cowley, to one who blames such thoughts, replies,

> "These are but trifles, I confess,
> Which me, weak mortal! move;
> Nor is your busy seriousness
> Less trifling than my love."

The ancient mind went further, as in the lines,

> "Why should little things be blamed?
> Little things for grace are famed."

It must be confessed that there is great truth in our poets, when they describe the hours that are made serene by certain presences, as when we read in Rokeby

> "Few months we live retired, unknown;"

or, as when coming to the small house in which two other lovers found an asylum, Orlando could not turn his eyes in any direction without seeing the words "Angelica and Medoro" written with coal in as many different ways as true-lovers' knots could run. "My lord," says Sir Niclus to his betrothed, in a Danish ballad, "will send me on an expedition away from you, my deepest rest!" If you do not feel the beauty and truth of that expression, it is probable that you can't make much out of any thing on this sequestered path. What passed in the heart when it was uttered you know well enough if you love; and, as Alfred de Musset says, if you do not love, you will do well to love in order to know it. So again, Bellamente, in Love's Cruelty, demands of Clariana,

> "———— Did I not affect thee
> Beyond all comfort of the world?"

Another, in a less natural manner it must be admitted, exclaims,

> "To live with you I can leave the courts of gracious kings
> And all those bowers where an eternal spring
> Makes every flower in love with its own beauty."

That's not the style to please; but a third, whose words give one a greater fancy for him, says deliberately—

> "I could dwell here for ever; I am
> Now but one degree from heaven—
> Since I imagine you are so near, it is no sin,
> I hope, to remain here with you."

At the risk of being thought to like exaggeration, let us cite another who represents a meeting that elicits these words,

> "———— Great is my content
> To see you here before me. O my soul's joy,
> If after every tempest come such calms,
> May the winds blow till they have 'waken'd death,
> And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas,
> Olympus high; and duck again as low
> As hell's from heaven! If it were now to die,
> 'Twere now to be most happy; for, I fear,
> My soul hath her content so absolute,
> That not another comfort like to this,
> Succeeds in unknown fate."

There may be a little bombast in the words, and some one may be tempted to say, "Credimus? an, qui amant, ipsi sibi somnia fingunt?" But as far as relates to the feeling intended to be expressed, these are probably not hyperboles, or poetical extravagances; they sound very like an utterance of real sentiments; however imperfectly and erroneously given through the poverty of human language, they constitute a part of our nature, and sometimes, grumble who will, only needing what is implied in silence to be an uncorrupted and very innocent part of it too. "To love," says Leibnitz, "is to make one's own happiness consist in that of another;" of which sublime definition Lacordaire speaking says, "Whoever has loved understands it; and he who has not loved, will understand it never. He who has loved knows that a shadow in the heart of his chosen one obscures his own; he knows that nothing costs him, prayers, tears, watches, labours, privations, to create a smile on a saddened countenance; he knows that he would die to save a life in danger; he knows that he was happy on account of another, on account of the graces, of the virtues, of the triumphs, of

the happiness of that other, and that if the shedding of his own blood had been required to confirm or augment that happiness of another, through love become his own, he would have given it to the last drop, with the sole regret that he could die but once for such an object. He who has loved knows all this. He who has not loved, knows it not; I lament for him, but I make him no answer."

The Latins, who, as Henry Stephens remarks, employed the expression "Domina," from which the modern races have borrowed their own style of language in this respect when a heart has been given up in presence of a thousand angels that will witness it, approached nearer to our Gothic feelings than the Greeks, who would never call themselves the servants of those who, as he rather ungallantly remarks, "had already the heart sufficiently high by nature." Such passages as we have just heard, no doubt, seem to imply a serenity of joy beyond what is allotted to mortality. It is easy for vicious and for worldly people above all to laugh them down, asking, perhaps, in the words of the song,

"Do you really think she did?"

It is not unprecedented to hear the most sensible people disposing of the matter as a thing for regret only. "General Joubert," says a great writer, "falling in love, married, and lost some weeks in the enjoyment of a fugitive felicity before taking the chief command of the Italian army." It is easy even for grave personages with narrow views, identifying poor moonish youths and lovers perhaps with traitors and poisoners, to excite displeasure at even an allusion to what they signify; but sneers or censure of this kind need not much trouble any one. "Ce n'est qu'un glorieux qui ne dit rien de tendre," as Boileau said of the Alexander of Racine. In these days the indulgence of a natural passion will not gain for any one the brilliancy that some aspire to. People must be unnatural and vicious to succeed in that way. This is horrible, but true. Your honest severe moralists fear the wanderings of passion, but they seem to mistake their epoch; for at present there is not much danger of men being capable of being drawn on by sensibility, or of their lamenting as a privation the being left without its conse-

quences, as when a great thinker, alluding to them, exclaims, "What! It is actually in the nature of human things that such a happiness should exist upon earth, and I must relinquish all hope of it,—and such a blissful state is possible, but to obtain it for myself is not possible!" There are multitudes now who neither believe in it, nor wish for it; yet are there hearts still made for each other, though chance, and distance, and society separate them; and they need not heed much the sneers or the censures of the incredulous. There are even great authorities to keep such primitive people in countenance. Richard of St. Victor, for instance, descends from empyrean heights to notice the serenity of which these poets attempt to convey an idea. He speaks as follows in a manner that would not be much thought of now, though whether through a more enlightened piety one dares not pronounce: "'Illumina faciem tuam, super servum tuum.' In lovers, what is ever sweeter or more delightful than to be cherished by alternate affection, and by beholding one another? Let them see all things excepting each other, and all things seem horrible and vile. Sweet is the sight of each other to lovers. It is so pleasant to love and to be loved. Well, after the manner of such lovers, the prophet exclaims, 'Illumina faciem tuam,' &c.*" Again, what to some even perhaps will sound stranger still,—"In this Canticle of Canticles," he says, "the divine wisdom condescends to use the words of men, the creatures of a day and the language of common affection, in order that the soul may be warmed, as it were, by the body, and led by the inferior to supernal love. For in this book are mentioned the kisses and embraces of friends, in which words the abundant mercy of God is to be considered, for calling us to love by expressions which have reference to the body. We should attend to this, that He acts towards us in a wonderful and merciful manner, as in this instance, descending to such words as ours in order to excite our hearts to sacred love, humbling Himself and exalting us†." Richard of St. Victor, therefore, for all his superhuman views, seems to have detected no evil in the kind of serenity that is here alluded to. And, in fact, as Lacordaire says, "love has this particularity, that it is a

* In Ps. cxviii. † In Cant. Cantic.

passion in its root, and the masterpiece of virtue in its essence and in its summit. When but a simple passion it corrupts; it is a selfish enjoyment to which one immolates another person; but when it becomes a virtue it saves, it regenerates, it elevates all. Love is together with peace an element not alone of serene hours, but of felicity. To love is to live by the heart, by that part of ourselves which is the most lively and the most sweet. When peace and love meet in one, there follows an unction which is not indeed felicity, which is its end, but which is, as it were, its kind of half-incipient smile and its first perfume."

However, no one need be told that a state of this sort is liable, from one cause or another, to sad and fatal interruptions; for

> "The ground that freighted lovers stand upon
> Is stuck with thorns,"

and

> "There is no such affliction to the soul
> As that which should preserve it, love."

"The horn is uninjured still, companion, after all the wetting of the feathered arrows, but you will have a pain at the heart."

> "O cruel fates! that do in love plant woe,
> And in delights make our disasters grow."

Richard of St. Victor describes some of these sorrows as belonging, and still without blaming aught directly, to one of its stages, using common language, which of course is always exposed to misrepresentation; for, as St. Augustine says, "we have but few just locutions, many inexact, but the intention may be understood—'Pauca sunt enim quæ proprie loquimur, plura non proprie; sed agnoscitur quid velimus.'" "At this degree, then," he says, "a person loves only one, thirsts after one, breathes after one, rests in one. Nothing sweet, nothing relishes unless made by this one. Whatever else is offered, whatever is met by chance, is rejected. Trodden on is every thing that does not militate for this affection, or serve it in some way or other. Who can describe the tyranny of this affection? how it expels every desire, excludes every study, puts an end to every exercise that does not fall in with this desire? Whatever

is done seems useless, nay, intolerable, unless it conduce to the one end. When what is loved can be had, he thinks that with it he has all things: without it all things are horrible and vile. Then his strength faileth him and his heart withers, he receives no counsel, he acquiesces in no reason, in a word, he admits of no consolation*." These are the troubles to which those who love are subject; while others look on and laugh to see them thus enslaved while they themselves are free. And what is the origin of all this, I pray? Tell it not to every one, but perhaps Menalcas can answer best when saying—

> "Phyllida amo ante alias; nam me discedere flevit,
> Et 'Longum, formose, vale, vale,' inquit, Iola!"

Perhaps as Preciosa says,

> "That farewell had a sound of sorrow in it,"

and then some Victorian can reply—

> "That was the first sound in the song of love!
> Scarce more than silence 'tis and yet a sound.
> Hands of invisible spirits touch the strings
> Of that mysterious instrument, the soul,
> And play the prelude of our fate ——."

"It is common," says Johnson, "to consider those who love as chargeable with all the consequences of their folly, and as the authors of their own unhappiness; but perhaps those whom we thus scorn or detest have more claim to tenderness than has yet been allowed them." At all events, as poor Lucetta says, on one of our excursions at least, to plead for love, deserves more fee than hate. Since, as the old song says,

> "De fine amour vient séance et bonté†."

At all events there is a natural chivalry according to which most mystically strong is the bond formed, one knows not how, that secretly unites two hearts; and, for my part, I believe that, as the Greek poet said, "love does not wrong the race of voice-dividing men, though it may be sometimes the pretext to the

* De Gradibus Charitatis.

† Bib. de l'Ecole des Chartes, tom. v. 8.

ill-regulated minds of mortals." One may be cast down and half angry at a friend ceasing to make one of us, and taking himself away from us like that; but every one who hears of a disastrous contrariety befalling former comrades this way, knowing how well they were qualified to enjoy happier hours, will feel personally wounded, and address to their absent persecutors such words as Frances pronounces in the Constant Maid, and say,

> "———— I durst tell you,
> In confidence of my cause, that you betray
> Two innocents to sorrow; and though heaven
> Look on, and seem to smile upon your cruelty,
> Yet there is punishment for divorcing those
> Whose hearts have been conjoined."

Such will be our sentence, though, excepting by the sympathy, it can't be expected to help them much; for, as Theodosia says,

> "When we have done all, and tired our breath,
> There is no cure for love but love or death."

How immense, in fact, is this influence, which can transform all things, not excepting death! Paris, as he falls, says to Romeo, "If thou be merciful, open the tomb, lay me with Juliet," as much as to say, Hitherto what you have done, inflicting my death wound, does not necessarily prove you unmerciful; you may yet be all pity, you can make it pass for nothing,—only lay me with Juliet. The fact is, as far as this life's happiness is concerned, and in relation to human things, if you are not an egotist, there is not much more for you to lose when you have no longer the certainty that, as Mme. de Lambert says, "there is a person in the world who cares for you, and who, perhaps, would do any thing to save you a chagrin." When that day comes, the cemetery, or some lonely garden that by its cypresses and heaths resembles it, is the only spot that appears to give you the semblance of satisfaction. These are, it is true, sad casualties to contemplate on such an expedition as ours only going out for the day. "He is no lover," says the Greek tragedian, "who does not love for ever." It is for poets to com-

plete the picture, leaving it to the amateurs of the ignoble burlesque to make of their lines what use they will:—

"They buried him in St. Mary's kirk,
Her in St. Mary's quire,
And out of her grave grew a red, red rose,
And out of his a brier.
And they twa met, and they twa plat,
And fain they wad be near,
And a' the world might ken right well
They were twa lovers dear."

Cowley, like Frederick Tennyson, would philosophize even and convince us that such absent or dead friends do meet:—

"Sure they do meet! enjoy each other there,
And mix, I know not how or where:
Their friendly lights together twine,
Tho' we perceive't not to be so,
Like loving stars which oft combine,
Yet not themselves their own conjunctions know."

It is better, be it said by the way, to welcome such fancies than to parody them, as some will do even on the river. There is little taste and little wit in the present rage for submitting every thing to this crucible. "By dint of laughing at all," as Jules Janin says, "we come to believe in nothing; we stifle emotions, we dry up tears, we puff up the heart, we become at first sceptics, then infidels, in fine, atheists." That constant laugh belongs not to those who seek the sort of enjoyment that we are supposing.

But come, lads! a truce to such thoughts, even though in the interests of literature we have stepped out of our path to defend them; and to speak troth I had forgot our way. Pretty sort of serene hours, truly! some one will exclaim, to end in roses and briers of that kind! Well, though on these occasions we want no tedious chapter of courtship after Sir Lancelot and Queen Guenever, no love-making in any form, nothing but what the French call "une camaraderie tranquille,"—a quiet companionship,—such things will be for all that; and, as may be said of some who would not injure any one,

"Thou see'st that, whether sad or gay,
Love mingles ever in their lay."

In heaven it is lawful to believe that the affections will have fair play at last, and that we may be able even to love all as now each can love only one. However, let us leave the pensive shady lane and sequestered footpaths, with all their old traditions and modern troubles, and get back as fast as we can to merrier company, where no one has been brought into such canaries.

Well, then, as we said on setting out, our expeditions require also people of a sociable turn of mind. We must resemble the swans, which, as Bewick remarks, are singularly fond of company, and averse to molesting any of the other water-birds, while attentive to the protection of their own families. Here, I suppose, the way before us is smooth enough, and without offence to any however inclined to stumble. It is not our fault, however, if the gravest authors go back, as we find them going back, to the first loving principle even to explain how man is to be sociable in the highest sense, attaining to that which shines far above,—

"The place where lovers be,
Above all happy hearths and homes,
Or roofs of thatch, or golden domes,
The gift of charity!"

It is not alone that they recognize its influence when crossed in its first form, as when the poet says of his Evangeline,

"So was her love diffused, but, like to some odorous spices,
Suffered no waste nor loss, though filling the air with aroma."

They discern its action even when crowned with the presence of its first object. We needs must hear them. "When one person, then," says Richard of St. Victor, "loves another, there is love, but not condilection. This latter supposes the existence of a third person, who is loved concordantly, socially, as if the affection of two were blown into one by the affection of a third love." And, in point of fact, as one of our old dramatists says, "No one, whether man or woman, has ever loved another without wishing to tell the secret to some one or other person."

Well, then, Richard goes on to say, "This is that concord of which the perfection exists in the Deity. Moreover," he adds, "man must resemble God in having charity for his equals. Where there is plenitude of goodness, there cannot be wanting the highest charity; for nothing is better and more perfect than that. But no one can have charity, and love only himself. There must be, therefore, plurality of persons, or there cannot be charity. But you will say, perhaps, that the Divinity can love his creatures. But would it be sufficient for man to love animals? This in both would be only inordinate. Man must love his equals whom he sees, as God must love those who are worthy of the highest love, than whom nothing can be better, who must consequently be his equals. Therefore, both in regard to man as in the Deity, there must be plurality of persons for charity to exist*." What is ordained for us, therefore, is to love God and one another. And, accordingly, in point of fact, as Portalis says, "If the needle opened the way to the whole world, Christianity rendered it sociable."

It is a rapid descent from such passages to enter on the ground of human philosophy, yet here, too, we have a similar direction. Butler affirms and proves that there are as real and the same kind of indications in human nature that we were made for society, and to do good to our fellow-creatures, as that we were intended to take care of our own life and health and private good; and that the same objections lie against one of these assertions as against the other. He shows that we have various appetites, passions, and particular affections quite distinct both from self-love and from benevolence, which are only instances of our Maker's care and love both of the individual and of the species, and proofs that He intended we should be instruments of good to each other, as well as that we should be so to ourselves,—that it is as clear we were made for society, and to promote the happiness of it, as that we were intended to take care of our own life, and health, and private good, though men are often unjust to themselves and to others, being for the most part equally so to both by the same actions†. The ancients even were not blind to these proofs. "Natura sumus apti," says

* De Trinitate. † First Sermon on Human Nature.

Cicero, "ad cœtus, consilia, civitates*." "As we use our limbs before we learn for what purpose we have them, so," he continues, "we are associated and conjoined between ourselves by nature; and if it were not so, there would be no place for justice or for goodness. No one would wish to pass his life in solitude, though with an infinite abundance of pleasures; so that it is clear that we are born 'ad conjunctionem congregationemque hominum et ad naturalem communitatem.'" It is no less grave a poet than Cowper who, personifying Selkirk on his desert island, has left the well-known lines,

"I am out of humanity's reach,
I must finish my journey alone,
Never hear the sweet music of speech,
I start at the sound of my own.
Society, friendship, and love,
Divinely bestowed upon man,
Oh, had I the wings of a dove,
How soon would I taste you again!"

We look alike, and talk alike, and in many respects think alike. "Intercourse," as Menelaus says, "is the teacher of all things to mortals;" and though it may rather wound some people's notions about the office of the press to hear it, the best things we learn from each other's lips. At all events, "if a man," says Balzac, "were alone in heaven, and had no one to converse with, he would grow weary of his own felicity, and wish to return to earth†."

Society which centres in a metropolis polishes our language and our manners. The Greeks, indeed, boasted of their Atticism, but the Latins traced this perfection to the influence of the city, and called it urbanity. Domitius Marsus and Quinctilian, after all their efforts, seemed puzzled about defining this quality attached to life in the metropolis; but the Abbé Gedoyn proves pretty clearly that it involved a certain gentleness in the tone of the voice, a sweetness of accent, and above all a character of goodness and politeness united together‡. This was the

* De Finibus, iii. † Aristippe, ii.
‡ De l'Urbanité Romaine, Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscr. tom. viii.

style which Cicero says "peculiarly belonged to the Roman race and to the city itself, in which was nothing to offend, to displease, or to blame,—nothing that savoured of either rustic asperity or of foreign insolence." So Tranio, in the haunted house of Plautus, scolding Grumio for acting rudely, says, "Why are you making this noise here before the house? Do you fancy yourself to be in the country? Be off into the country!" In modern times, too, the influence of capitals in this respect is not to be disdained. The term urbanity has not quite lost its meaning. Where in England have you such good humour, such an unwillingness to offend strangers, such affability in the lower orders, as in London and its immediate neighbourhood? And then another and far more important thing to notice is the fact, that town life is favourable to real charity and the spiritual love of mankind. When minds have not been systematically disarranged and spoiled by worldliness, or a kind of antagonism that is as bad, there is something almost heavenly in the serene enjoyment one feels in being in a good-natured crowd. I think it is Cicero who says that there is something august in the presence of a multitude, though composed of persons whom individually you may hold in slight regard. This seems opposed to the axiom of mathematicians, but it is true in morality. And then if you have learned the art we shall presently insist on, of watching kindly and lovingly these individuals, how delightful do you feel the opportunity that it affords you of seeing manifested good feeling, friendly intercourse, the obliging disposition, the wish to be pleased and to please, archness, even fun, sympathy, laughter, and tears! All that passes in the street seems quite a family scene. You really then love your neighbour as yourself, and "no mistake."

But, whatever you may think of these suggestions, "God, in sooth," as the old poet says, "hath made one man in need of one, and another of another." Friendship and companionship, at all events, can hardly be separated in idea from the enjoyment of serene hours in this life. Cicero says that he studied law when young, not alone for practice, but also for the comfort and ornament of his old age, that when his strength should fail him he might be able to vindicate his house from solitude in the same way as Q. Mucius succeeded, whose doors and vestibules,

even when he was suffering from ill-health, were besieged by a crowd of citizens and great men.

Whatever may be said for or against such general company, one thing is certain. Let you be ever so weak and desponding, when with those you like, to speak in a general way, all hours are serene; but let you be ever so strong and hearty, when separated from them, though you may be looking at your own deer from your windows, if you have a human heart, all hours are dull and wearisome. In fact, we had occasion already to observe how bitter under such circumstances they are likely to prove. With what feeling is Crassus represented by Cicero, as speaking of having found himself with men most dear and most friendly, "carissimos et amicissimos!" and of his forgetting, when with the young, that he is himself old. Cicero, too, speaking of Brutus and Pomponius coming to him, says that they were so dear and delightful to himself, that the mere sight of them could soothe to serenity his mind troubled with the care of public affairs. But all this will be admitted at once by most people as a natural and personal result, attested by their own experience.

But now we must directly and formally discuss a more delicate subject. In requiring then a disposition to like society, it can hardly be expected, I presume, as a general rule for common life, that we are to exclude from accompanying us as ineligible every one of those who in their collective capacity constitute half of the human race; that is to say, every child of our grandmother Eve who is a female, or for thy more sweet understanding, to use Armado's words, a woman. At least you who read pages of the kind presented here, will not expect to find in them much countenance for such severity—you, I say, perhaps, as the poet adds,

> "So well acquainted with our zeal,
> For all the female common-weal."

Though the ancients chose to be somewhat divided on this point, —Plato, in his banquet, turning out the female musicians, thinking it better for philosophers to hear "their own voices even while drinking hard," and Xenophon introducing them into his party,—it seems rather strange for persons not philoso-

phers, and not in such love with what they say themselves, to express only a hope in such a case, as if there were a doubt or difficulty involved in it; but the fact is, what with one thing and another, so many people, high, cool, and judicious, or else sentimental, transcendental, and poetical, are grown artificial of late, that we can do no more than presume that things of any kind may on all occasions be suffered to pass in a common natural way. "O that detestable code," exclaims Coleridge, "that excellence cannot be loved in any form that is female, but it must needs be selfish!" as if one of the chief elements of civilization did not consist in the calm and delicate and intellectual relation of the sexes. I admit, however, that without any such abominable and systematic opposition, there may be some very choice and highly eligible spirits that seem to be content at times to have it all to themselves, and all their own way, which, whatever it be, is to be exclusively masculine. It was not till he had attained his twenty-eighth year, in 1667, that, as a very delicate judge in such matters, Madame de Longueville remarks, Louis XIV. found his tongue untied in the presence of women, so as to be able to converse in an easy agreeable way with them, as any other man. We may often have some such reverential and half-frightened ones on board with us, who may be anxious to push off without waiting for other company. We can but hope, therefore, that though unquestionably one of our "Hoop de dooden doos," who are seldom content like some very rustic children to wear bulrush hoops, will occupy as much space as would suffice for half a score of pegtops, by some contrivance and compromise or other room may be found for all applicants exposed to such trouble; for it is better to be ruled and corrected by some one on the spot than to have to appeal, when it's too late, to the judgment of some one absent; as when a boy in the street, seeing some dandiprat making a fool of himself, after by looks exhausting his own stock of contempt, thinks to reform him, or at least to raise a laugh at his expense that ought to succeed that way, by exclaiming, "Won't I tell my sister? that's all!" Of course there are moments of life which many young men can remember when, as Mary Shelley said to Leigh Hunt, writing about a mutual friend, they are inclined to think women silly, unamusing toys, and people with

whose society they are delighted to dispense; though a little later, forsooth, they can be happy only where they are admiring what they formerly despised. Moreover, we do not mean to say but that there are times and circumstances when, let who will lose by the want of it, there can be no mixed companionship. Let all things be understood, therefore, as it is proper they should; but a state of things which involves their absence can hardly be expected to hold every day. And indeed, Lacordaire, alluding to this very subject, says that not even any class are wholly amerced of this gracious influence, since those who are more directly affected by certain exceptional obligations, having still a mother or a sister, are in consequence not excluded from the beneficent affection of which we speak, which he qualifies as the gift of God to all men, and the sacred condiment of the whole of life. Without any more needless allusions, therefore, to the partial exigencies that may sometimes arise from an exceptional career, it is sufficient to say once for all that those who were not born women-haters must be permitted to object to receiving amongst them any professed misoganist who, when a soul feminine salutes him, would exclude and regard, as if secretly he cursed, all Eve's daughters of what complexion soever, telling us perhaps into the bargain, that like the mystic Saint-Martin of our times, "he feels at the bottom of his being that he belongs to a country in which there are no women." At times, perhaps, others who may very naturally be expected to feel what the poet terms

> "A wondrous yearning after womanhood *,"

will undertake to argue the matter coolly with him, and reply,

> "——— Good Cato,
> Be not over wise now: what is the reason
> That women are not sainted in your calendar?"

Is it not remarkable, speaking quite seriously, to find that Timon the misanthropist made an exception in favour of women, when he denounced the human race? At least Aristophanes, who was his contemporary, tells us that he had not as much

* D. Gray.

hatred for women as for men*, which was all that we could reasonably expect from such an individual, and equivalent, I can't help thinking, to the most passionate eulogy pronounced by any other man. At all events, what should prevent these high-spirited little sisters, and daughters, and friends of ours from being eligible as members of the society of serene hours while fulfilling all the highest conditions required from them? Of course, as a certain Maurice said to his mother, "they are a little cunning, and in fact penetrating to excess, past man's thought; though sweet and gentle, they have an arch malice!—we are only sillies near them. When they wish to know what we wish they should not know, they encompass us with nets. 'In faith, I'll know your business, Harry, that I will.' They have been always the same, you perceive; they lose neither a gesture nor a look, they force us to confess all; they can read our thoughts; they catch us as we should an animal, so that the best and shortest way is, from the beginning, to tell them every thing without waiting to be interrogated;" but for all that, as he says in another letter to the same maternal authority, "they are born to console us for every earthly misfortune." And, besides, viewing them from our point of view, they seem born for the express purpose of directing and encouraging all excursionists in search of the serene. It is their eyes that, from one end of a boat to the other, can divine if you are sad, and why you are sad; that can embolden you to say a thing or reduce you to a self-preserving silence. Nor is this all. Why there are, if one may not have one's ears boxed for saying so, good fellows among them too, as some one affirms in an old play,—aye, and such as can pull a boat well too,—as you can witness any day that you get above the first lock and row among those islands from which these good beauties can suddenly emerge to startle you.

> "I thinke nor say but as ye say,
> It is no mayden's lore."

But what will not some aspire to now? The Americans, at least, are said to have their Ἰσανδροι, though I hear nowhere of there being a race of women as of old, called Στυγάνορες, or

* In Lysistrata, 887.

enemies of men. There are, at all events, here in Britain, Clorindas who, while very gentle, can manage an oar or a bridle as well as a needle and distaff, who are supple for the race and valiant to despise feminine terrors, who keep as early hours, too, as any heart bent on an expedition can desire. Witness Cowley's Constantia, who,

> "Like other maids, would walk at break of day;"

when we are told—

> "Aurora blush'd to see a sight unknown,
> To behold cheeks more beauteous than her own."

You think, perhaps, that, as with the old Romans, it is forbidden these gentle ones to drink even a glass of wine; you think, because forsooth a French infidel has lately recommended it, that young women keep as quiet as possible, take hardly any exercise, never bathe in cold water, eat little meat, and "drink no wine;" so to meet this latter precept you fancy that you ought to have some "passum," as the Latins called it, or other watery beverage for them. But as for this inaction, there they are pulling away like the best of us; and as for your thin potations, why we may reply with Axionicus, in his Philinna,

> "Just trust them to drink only water!"

Only ask, with one in the Female Darter of Antiphanes,

> "Would you now like, my dearest friend, to drink?"

and you will have the same answer,

> "No doubt I should;"

leaving us to say, "Well, go thy ways, thou'rt as witty a marmalade-eater as ever I conversed with." Though, I promise you, they will not play the part that Pherecrates in his Tyranny ascribes to them, or

> "Heap abuse on us, and swear that they,
> Poor injured dears, have taken nothing *."

No, but like good fellows as they are, who, as Chaucer says,—

* Athen. xi.

"Well can know a draught of London ale,
They will both drynke and byten on a cake;
In felowschip well can laughe and carpe."

For they will not let us have all fool to ourselves; they'll be snatching—and, in a word, being with all this good Christians, they verify what Dame Prudence affirmed of the sex generally, with rather different thoughts from those of the clown, who says, after being at court, that "our Isbels o' the country are nothing like your Isbels o' the court." "What is better than gold? Jasper. And what is better than jasper? Wisedom. And what is better than wisedom? Woman." That dame, were she indeed prudence itself, might well say it; for, first and foremost, as our old dramatist humorously says, "No woman can be lost. They may be mislaid a little, but found again I warrant you." And perhaps what is about to follow now will supply an instance.

To dismiss then every allusion to what is frivolous, and grow grave all of a sudden, let us pause awhile to consider how these few words, light as they are, might unintentionally lead to some incidental impressions that would be useful to every one, such as teach not only the advantage of studying and trying to imitate, under all circumstances, the gifts of nature; but also how these charming and beneficial graces require to be transfigured, as it were, by the influence of the supernatural; such as teach, in any thing but a commonplace way, how full of peril without the latter is human life at its commencement, and in its most innocent and engaging form; how, consequently, this wide and universal theatre presents more woeful pageants than the scene perhaps wherein we play in; how easily bright things, when left to themselves, come to confusion; how worthy they are, then, of at least our pity, and yet, in fine, that even still there may be, notwithstanding, much to learn from them. So that 'notandum est,' as St. Jerome, alluding to those in whom they abounded, says, they may not be excluded from participating in the effects of the great expiation of the Cross, which is to restore all things by Him who came into the world, "propter peccatores, ut omnium peccata deleret." Therefore, these same words of our old dramatist, dropped from his lips as if by accident, might direct us on the trace of a whole region, and to many an unknown one, of suggestive facts re-

lating, strange to say, though in itself tragical at times, to our immediate subject. Let us then, for a few moments, while glancing at it, and averting our mind from the speaker who, as if engaged by another, is merely about to relate what we may suppose one of our usual companions in the soul of sound, good fellowship desires in a moment of confidence to communicate; let us, I say, hope for an attentive, and if it were to be only but for this once, O ye gentle ones of either sex, a sympathetic audience. Yes, reader, if thou be'st capable of things serious, while conning a lesson of general import in the interest actually of mirth and of serene hours, be sad for a moment, as we would make you, not in consideration for the officious comrade that we can fancy to ourselves as wanting a pretext to have his particular story listened to, thinking it would be to bar the door upon his own liberty if he were to deny his griefs to a friend; but, independent of that object, through regard for the subject of it, thus incidentally falling under our notice, for one who may be considered as a stranger accidentally met with, rendering us this last service, all that is in her power now, and who is never again to be heard of while the world lasts; which is a reflection, by the way, that may be favourable to our forming a correct, that is, a lenient as well as a profound estimate respecting the things that we shall have to observe; since all of us, for that matter, in regard to human judgments, are soon to be enveloped in the same silence, out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries.

Every time serves for the matter that is then born in it; and what time flits gently with "friend remember'd not?" But even were it otherwise, and were we merely wishing, through a regard for what taste requires, to imitate nature by introducing variety into our method of proceeding in this book, and contrasts which you do not expect in our points of view; were we only anxious to profit by the secret of the greatest writers who, as some one remarks, are always those who excite in their readers the most sensations possible at one and the same time; were we merely hoping to verify the remark of Michaud of the Academy, that "only that which is difficult to say is well said," and indeed every where words do well when they are employed to please, and not injure those that hear,—or, without any literary ambition, a thing, of course, out of the question in such pages as

these, had we no other object but to diminish the ardour of those who think that every thing naturally brilliant is, at least after our human notions, happy; and while retaining and counselling a just fear, to diminish the harshness of those who see the faults of what is brilliant, without admitting of extenuation, or even of an ultimate hope as to the form of its future existence; which state of mind seems to argue, in a Christian point of view, what may be called a false morality,—were we only wishing by a work of art, which, of course, is never an instrument to be employed in the service of a doctrine, or by a simple story in which there is no concealed lesson reserved for a few, to ward off danger from the impressionable, who are easily dazzled by what is bright, and to promote equity where there is a disposition to rigour; for equity is often only another word for a kind and gentle interpretation,—it might be well, in accordance with this friend's desire, to produce here a certain miniature; and I would add to it another, representing one under a different form of development, so that we might see in succession two portraits very dissimilar as to the type they represent; while perhaps, through some unfathomable mystery, capable, as some, interpreting the parable of the labourers called at the eleventh hour, are willing to believe, of an ultimate union in the bosom of that sanctity of which it is said, where fancy is nothing, reality all, "culpas lavat, reddit innocentiam lapsis et mœstis lætitiam." Over one of these pictures, when we undraw the little curtain which is before it, a tear-drop, if you have any such thing left, dear companion, may fall, or employ a finger's stealthy operation to displace it; while the other likeness, independent of such wishes and efforts which are uncalled for by what it brings before us, presenting so great a contrast in its temporal formation, should be kissed with the soul's tears, and worn within one's breast as if it were some holy thing, or such a "medal about the neck" as Shakspeare says Bohemia wore, put on with prayers, as watchman to the heart, a thing of wondrous potency; a thought indeed that naturally occurs to those who saw the beauteous frame of the original, so young and so fair, and already so spiritualized by its life-long use, laid asleep in death, the sight of which pure, cold flesh, transfigured, so to say, would of itself explain that tenderness and reverence of the first Christians

for the limbs and the relics of the martyrs, the witnesses of Christ.

The first perhaps, notwithstanding our grave object in wishing it produced, ought to be drawn forth, not carelessly, but with a certain reserve, almost with solemnity, for all its bright colours, and only on implied conditions, though we may fear that they are not likely to be adhered to by every one, however they may be verbally accepted; for with respect even to the dead, as in this instance, the off-hand judgments of humorous men, and even the cool deliberate sentences of some of grave and austere quality, living only in bone, accustomed to threaten with the same breath that they use while encouraging, and to give praise corrected by humiliating denunciations—by allaying the good precedents with "but yet," which our poet compares to a gaoler bringing forth some monstrous malefactor—which contingencies indeed it might be the express object of any one, intensely moved, to deprecate by producing this picture, seem to us to be often as unreasonable for all their apparatus of logic, and as cruel for all their high-sounding expressions of commiseration, as they appear to be unjust; a fact which, without the least desire to wrong honourable men, can surprise no one who considers how numerous in society are the respectable persons who might truly affirm of themselves, with a great philosopher, that they are the friends of almost all minds, and the enemies of almost all hearts. On many occasions some will question with a wicked tongue. I am perfectly aware of that. They might generally, as here, have spoken a thousand things that would have done the time more benefit, and graced their kindness better; for nothing is gained by sinister applications that distort and strain the general scope and purpose of an author to a particular and private spleen; and certainly some indulgence must be granted to our common nature when it pours its grief into the bosom of a friend; but since, through all our rambles, we address those who, with a fund of humanity to begin with, have learned at times to be serious on all subjects, since they too, probably, have had their experience of things with a thoughtful result; and since there seems to be no reason on earth why either they or we should hesitate to make use of that advantage, it strikes me that a miniature of the kind that is now offered, instead of

being cast among frippery, or even locked up under a thousand locks, as Charles V. wished his own autobiography to be, might, in accordance with our friend's desire, and without injury to either the dead or living, be uncovered, just in the same way as Addison in his best moments, and La Bruyère in his portrait of Madame d'Aligne de Boislandry, gave us miniatures from the society they lived in, which are authorities of power to give our confidence approbation; and, may one dare to add, that, independently of the general lesson which it necessarily conveys, so impressive, as we shall find in the sequel, and even religious, it is not the part of any one's humanity not to look at this particular likeness, raked from oblivion, with a certain tenderness, even supposing that, as in the present case, with our friend amidst all the gravity of sorrow, there were to be no other sentiment awakened? for the subject of this little picture, which will profane no eye that looks on it, for all its gay colours, having been originally formed by the author of nature to be intrinsically, and even for mental contemplation, "a thing of beauty,"—when all is said in its disparagement, whether by those who have the humour of disliking whatever is bright, or by others who may have more solid motives, I think there is not in the world either malice or matter to alter it. If bad thinking, which can be elicited every where, do not wrest true speaking, our friend's commentary will offend nobody. We at least will speak her fair in death, and, when the tale is told, bid you be judge; and then you will say perhaps with an unknown poet,

> "Where thou hast touched, O wondrous Death!
> Where thou hast come between,
> Lo! there for ever perisheth
> The common and the mean."

As for those who knew the person endowed with such gifts of nature, if they were to deny that one of their motives for wishing it to be produced was affection and sorrow, for which there is not a name, whether they are in the right or in the wrong, for choosing this precise instance, through yielding to such passions, might be for the wise to determine; but certainly I believe they would say what is not true. To one of quick re-

ceiving enough is shown; a cyprus, not a breast, hides their poor hearts; and, as Prospero concludes,

> "As you from crimes would pardoned be,
> Let your indulgence set them free."

For some time past, keeping apart from us of the boat, and shunning under some pretext or other our excursions, which formerly they loved, they have of late (and wherefore you will shortly divine) lost all their mirth, foregone all custom of exercises; and, indeed, like Hamlet, it goes so heavily with their disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to them a sterile promontory, and, in brief, all that is seen appears no other thing to them but a passing congregation of vapours. Perhaps their wit's diseased; at least, it looks as if they are sick of many griefs. But, on the other hand, after all, why should any one, however honourable, distrust his own sympathy, or feel diffident as to this act of confidence on the part of a friend thus cast down, when its object was a person whose character, when all hypotheses have been exhausted, there is reason to believe admitted, through some last grace, of final harmony with that of the other, recalling one in whom these gifts were transfigured, and whose likeness is to follow?—since both are to be submitted to Him, of whom, as St. Leo says, the nature is goodness, the will power, and the work mercy; and since, take it all in all, the former was one which must have only shadowed forth, in its aspirations at least, from the first, an idea of the Creator when He called it into being. Truly, when a fine summer's morning comes upon us, with some sweet music in the grove, that awakes thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls, until the spiritual world seems near, and every one is viewed under the influence of supernatural impressions, one feels disposed to dwell upon this fancy, or rather deep conviction, all the more; for doubtless in that childlike pleasure that we are going to hear about, without any distinct image at the moment, and even in the exercise of that exquisite grace in dancing, which will not either be forgotten,—for the very movement, which corresponds to the sweet light intermittent melody, is something spiritual, the stops and pauses of the music seeming to elicit what is wholly so, there is a joy disinterested, universal, and illimitable, akin probably to

what is felt elsewhere by creatures of a higher order. And after all, why should the leaves of any of God's flowers, with his own blessed dew still sparkling fresh upon them, though torn and trampled on, and stained with earth, be thought absolutely worthless, and without perfume or any virtue, because it is supposed that a profane hand may have once touched them? Who will stand by merely to scorn and mock when another hand, though equally profane perhaps, is thought to be engaged in gathering them up, with unutterable emotion, in order to lay them gently on the secret altar that is raised ever to receive in silence such tributes, in the hearts of the affectionate, of all who can feel and of all who can love? "I should have a very bad opinion," says a celebrated woman, "of a man who could not love what he admired; but I should have a still worse opinion of one who could love only what he admired." Were such a judge present, the uncovering of this first picture, which in one point only may involve perhaps an application of the latter test, would constitute therefore for some persons a rather critical moment; but come what may, and to affect an indifference that one is far from feeling, on every ground it is well to change a little the method of these rambling discussions, which are often tedious enough in all conscience, and try to put a little life into them by attempting to apply this very test to our present company: and, besides, forgetting our friend, and discarding, if that be possible, the personal motives of every one, I see no reason why there should not be even a certain general interest, approaching to the pleasure which many feel in reading of a fictitious character in a portrait taken from life of a real person, from whose turn of mind and manners, as we shall soon find, there would assuredly have been much to learn, and whose leading traits were to have loved much, suffered much, pitied much, and forgiven all; for by the report of those who knew her, it might be truly said, in the words of the poet, that

"More loving dust ne'er wept beneath the skies."

To pity is a virtuous act, and therefore, though Shakspeare says the contrary, a sad tale is often better even in the sweet summer, with companions that do converse and waste the time together,

and this is what the picture will in itself unfold. No one then, we may believe, will be the worse for seeing it. Perhaps, indeed, to urge a still graver plea, there is nothing more calculated to confirm men in their belief of those primeval and divine lessons with which even the old traditional philosophy of Plato is so fraught, to say nothing of the blaze of heavenly light encompassing the Christian school, in its austerest, most religious inspirations, than when we hear, as in this simple story, of some poor player left without that assistance, an image of our life, that frets an hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more. Therefore, even on this ground, it is well to tell it. No one ever did repent for doing good, nor need our friend now. Say, if you will, what in a certain sense might be conceded, that it is but an airy charm to work upon your senses, a spirit as it were called from its confines to enact a present purpose, a mere dream for all his positiveness as to its exact fidelity to what was lately amongst us; a vision of the fancy, as strong imagination bodies the forms of things conceived; say, if you will, that the tone of his mind has possibly modified the materials with which he had to deal, and that in this picture the subjective mode of treatment, as German artists term it, has been followed to the detriment of truth; though, had you known the original, you would probably have rather deemed it a specimen of precisely the contrary manner, the object itself being chiefly apparent, still, in whichever way it has been handled, it will serve to further the precise object that we have in view in this day's rambling, for even on the excursions that we are engaged in, there is a want of such shapes, since, if we would only apprehend some innocent joy, we need must comprehend some bringer, though it were only through the ideal, of that joy. But this perhaps is trifling, and all the more it seeks to hide itself, the greater bulk it shows. I see I talk but idly, and you mock at me. Nevertheless, whatever reception you give to the picture, seen apart in your own mind from the general and important impressions with which it is unavoidably associated in that of others, however you may interpret the motives of any one for producing it, put it all in what brief language you will, disengaged from what you may think the precautions of form with which our friend encompasses it, as if shunning the example of those who are so

often now inclined to disgorge into the general world the headed evils which they with licence of free foot have caught; let the ideal be sifted thus, seen in its most elementary form, and reduced, as geometricians say, to its simplest expression—declare clearly and rudely what you may imagine our friend intimates obscurely and elaborately, and still I cannot perceive how you can give it a sinister sense in regard at least to the alleged motive for its production here, without, through a mistake as to his intentions and wishes, attributing views and ways of thinking and of feeling to him which, speaking it in his spirit and honour, he may say are not his own, and passing a judgment on the subject itself, though what you hear of were tried by every tongue, for which you would have, I believe, no Christian warrant. Gentleness, like your true sanctity, will to the senses bend no corrupted ear, but show the worth that learned charity aye wears; and here, at least, in this audience, where is no gross interpreter, will our disclaiming from a purposed evil free us so far in your generous thoughts. The fact however is, as I anticipate it, that you will not stir, as Shakspeare says, your pettitoes till you have both picture and commentary; though, of course, in accordance with our friend's desire, let some move on; we'll have it out by ourselves, speaking and listening in peace and humbleness. But enough of this preamble, which a light sorrow would not have justified. Let the portrait first speak for itself, and then while viewing it we shall hear truth too, with much that we should ponder on, though in a direct way relating only to the minute, exquisite, and valuable qualities required for the enjoyment of a serene hour. So here it is, without more warning, a very slight thing, we must confess, picked up, as if by chance, where slightest things are flocking, but still entitled perhaps even to some little respect, not alone through consideration for the lesson of universal interest of which unavoidably it happens to be suggestive, and which in general it will be left to the beholder to draw for himself, but also from its being a shadow of what is gone; a dead likeness, a kind of photograph, and the only one existing, taken from a person whom many but yesterday have beheld living, while thinking her far less likely to pass away than themselves,—the whole being a thing also, as I said, very pitiful and as true;

and if again we were asked what prompted us to consent to its being produced here, there is nothing, at least in generous moments, when all selfish consideration is flung to the winds, which we could more easily answer, for, if the whole truth be told, it was compassion, it was sympathy, overpowering every other sentiment; though really it was also, as we have just professed, the thought that a picture can tell what we would say, in general, more exactly and efficiently than words without it would have the power, attesting the justice of our own previous remarks respecting the qualities of mind and heart, as well as the external manners which are required for such occasions as we are speaking of. Good should be pertinent; but independent of the graver inferences alluded to, so it is here; for this part of our disputation, you know, is concerning the advantages which can be derived from the society of women and from woman's friendship. Let me then be privileged to be a plain and fearless speaker. Our free drift halts not at particulars, but moves itself in a wide sea; no perverse meaning infects the course we hold; so take with us an eagle flight bold and forth on, leaving no track behind.

"What a good is it," exclaims even one of your ancient adamantine Stoics, actually treating on serenity; "what a good, where there is a mind congenial, a conscience less to be feared than your own, a conversation that can banish care, a person whose advice can yield the best counsel, whose hilarity can dissipate sadness, of whom the sight alone is sufficient to delight you! In the interest of serene hours," he continues, "you must avoid people who are sombre and always deploring things around them, and to whom every subject suggests a complaint. A dull and mournful companion," saith he, in conclusion, "is hostile to tranquillity*." One might imagine that this grave and formal writer in the above passage was preparing to introduce us to the very individual of whom we now are to unveil the portrait. At least it is clear from it that not even his severity would have deemed the details that we are about to give, though considered in themselves alone, irrelevant. But while reading them, while the curtain is undrawn, let music sound and even many instru-

* Sen. de Tran. Animi.

ments be touched, that, as just suggested, we may hear played, say by one of our German bands, bringing it into the air, a sweet sprightly yet deeply moving strain or two, uttering, as it were, the language of the transfigured world, which is not speech but song, language in fact of the infinite, poems of an immense elevation, transporting you into regions that you might fancy were known only at the moment to yourself—music full of ideas which can raise you to those celestial contemplations which, by a process strictly logical, will bring you back without effort or any contrast to the whisperings of nature, if it would not be more correct to say, that seem to effect an accordance for the time between earth and heaven.

But let's see the picture while they serve in their harmony. We will now draw the curtain, and show it to you; though the grace speaks his own standing, interpret to the dumbness of the gesture.

Gentle, arch, witty, and all this to such a degree, that, whoever would have his ears banqueted with pleasant and sprightly conferences, pretty girl's scoffs and dalliance, ought to have repaired to her as to one unrivalled; if our reporter speaks truth, loving to ecstasy music and poetry, hating, if it were not more exact to say, almost ignoring all vulgar realities, skilled through quickness of eye and ear, and a certain natural grace in feminine accomplishments, for she was chiefly self-taught, with a spirit to practise even some of those belonging to the other sex, for she seemed almost as much at home on horseback, scouring the commons, or at an oar in contest with another boat, as in the circle of the dance, when, like Florizel, you could have wished her

> "A wave o' the sea, that she might ever do
> Nothing but that; move still, still so, and own
> No other function;"

clever, without any of the disagreeable traits of clever people, full of great popular good sense, from having been, through a strange destiny, when all but a soft child, rolled in the current of things amongst the infinite doings of the world, while all these features were brought into more beautiful relief by being witnessed in combination with a disposition that was singularly

diffident and even nervous, which made her, as children say, afraid of being frightened, and shrink from observation to such a degree that of late, after a long illness, it seemed to her to require an effort of courage even to pass on foot through the streets at noon-day,—with a fund of refined, deep, and expansive feelings, this cunningest pattern of excelling nature, says our friend, could join no company without imparting to it a certain impression of intimate contentment, which, notwithstanding the magic sprightliness of its form, and the kind of ideal tenderness that it generated, partook of the character of a serene rest, of which no one who had not a singular hardness and obliquity in his nature, was able wholly to resist the charm.

> "A springy motion in her gait,
> A rising step, did indicate
> Of pride and joy no common rate,
> That flush'd her spirit.
> I know not by what name beside
> I shall it call: if 'twas not pride,
> It was a joy to that allied
> She did inherit *."

Sensitive to such an excess that the least apprehension of danger used to make her tremble and turn pale, this delicately constituted creature, quickly made ill and well again, for conceit in weakest bodies strongest works, was like a harp of which the strained chords would sound under the imperceptible vibration of the gentlest air; but those soft notes were not lost on any one unless a negligent student, while friends who learned her by heart will say that it was difficult not to become by degrees more amiable and worthy of the good opinion of others, in fact, more like every one who was just what he ought to be, when you had been accustomed to hear them; for though wanting in that higher culture which, while transfiguring all graces, restores them to their original form as witnessed in their very type,

> "Still she was train'd in nature's school,
> Nature had blest her,"

and therefore she possessed an exquisite innate tact in esti-

* C. Lamb.

mating what was fair and right and decorous, what became a woman in every rank, and what was proper and noble in the other sex; while some would go on to say, in the language of lovers, that it was but a natural impression to wish themselves different from what they were with regard to the world in order that they might in all respects come nearer to her, the fact it appears being that she was one of those persons who can impart a certain fanciful and for ever indelible charm even to those material and social things that come to be wound up in any way with the idea or memory of their presence, as, for instance, to places, limits, local aspects, neighbourhoods, however defective in their humble character, and to associations however in their parts and combinations obscure. Few, we are assured, could trust to their own obduracy, or remain quite as unfeeling as nature perhaps had made them, who had been used to witness in another a gratitude which sought to hide itself while being all the while boundless for any kindness of which she had been the object. We may believe such testimonies; for there is always something in a generous, loving, and forgiving disposition without parade, that can be communicated, and it is even from hearing disgust at cruelty expressed with such womanly persuasion that a man begins to cherish a certain tenderness for dumb animals, and a dislike for whatever borders in any form on harshness towards them. But there are more important and useful thoughts suggested by a portrait of the kind we are now looking at; for, say those who knew what was the warm and tender benevolence of the living original, it was difficult not to feel drawn to the exercise of supernatural charity and compassion for our fellow-men, from the divinest motives, when one observed so slight a creature unable apparently to reserve any thing for her own exclusive enjoyment if there was any one whom she knew wanting it. Certainly, when such a mirror is set before a man, he needs must see himself, and then it must have been difficult not to make reflections as to one's own character when observing a person who had, as they tell us, a starting tear to greet every allusion to a kind, noble, and heroic action,—who had actually a flood of tears to compassionate any wretched object whom chance directed to her door,—who had savings every week out of slender means for poor relations far away, and for small ingenious projects of good to be done in her

neighbourhood, as when she insisted on the child of a servant, who had only been with her a week, being sent to school at her expense. In all this you see the stretching out, as it were, of nature to meet the more express directions of the supernatural influence. The old, however, in an especial manner, it appears, were objects of her regard. She never, they tell us, saw an aged person passing, and indicating want, without giving relief of some kind or other. She used to say that in them at least there could be no imposition; and, besides, she seemed to have a peculiar liking for them. She was fond of playing and romping with old people among her acquaintances, and making them laugh and cry out, and giving them little presents as a compensation, she would say, for having teased them, which made them possibly all the more anxious, as they generally seemed to be, for her to begin again.

Celia would sit and mock the good housewife Fortune from her wheel, that her benefits henceforth might not be so mightily misplaced. Reigning in gifts of the world, and not in the lineaments of nature, it is certain that, as Rosalind says, she "doth most mistake in her gifts to women." But those who have gone slightly over low steps and now are mounted, or those who seek to follow by rising in the world, might have studied, we are told, with great advantage the constant artlessness and easy manners of this ill-requited one; for, originally knowing little of the sweet degrees that this brief world affords, left literally, as far as human observation could determine, alone with nature, when wayward casualties maligned her lowly state, after experiencing through most ungentle fortune and a combination of unhappy circumstances at an early period of her life, at least for a short interval, absolute destitution in its most appalling form, into such straits driven that it looked as if sharp misery was to wear her to the bones, benetted round with villainies, left without a friend or any one to fly to but whom she might trust as she would adder's fangs, in later years when free and lifted above want (though to the last her homely stars failed to equal her great merits) by gifts that she received not proudly, as the philosopher says some accept them, she would have scorned herself if any robe of hers had changed her disposition. So she continued to be as humble in her wild ingenuous sim-

plicity as when she seemed left alone in the world like a stray or forsaken orphan, never assuming any airs of distinction, or evincing the smallest trace of forgetfulness of what she had herself suffered, or of conventional arrogance towards any human creature, but, on the contrary, with all her natural instinctive elegance and unaffected dread of the mere rabblement of those who are qualified as roughs, betraying on every occasion a fondness for the common people, seeming to receive the liveliest pleasure from chatting familiarly with poor struggling creatures merry with true Celtic wit, as many of her frequent visitors were, which she would catch as quick as the greyhound's mouth, cheering them in the flatness of their low condition and misery, and making laugh the bystanders by saying something pleasant, kind, and cheerful, like a true wit-snapper, each moment, to every one who for an instant became in any way dependent on her, though, as in the instances just alluded to, it were only, what our old dramatists so often represent, some wandering street merchant proffering fruit or trinkets at the door. Where means, like hers, are limited, there can, of course, be no great visible results from such a disposition, though, as with her, there may be a hand ever responding, as far as possible, to the kind wishes; but can you conceive an influence purely human in more strict accordance with the highest, or more likely, as exhibiting a work of the Creator, to confirm any one in generous charitable habits, than that emanating from a creature of such soft pity? for, after all, according to the general voice of those who knew her, that is the term which conveys the most exact idea of this general character in one who was so framed that, if you credit their assertions, the very instant people saw her did their hearts fly to her service,—loving her literally at first sight, without their knowing very well why, o'er heads and ears,—though, perhaps, they accounted for it afterwards by remarking that she had only to speak, without even uttering any of her new felicitous expressions, picked up one knew not where, but of which the source seemed inexhaustible, to win on every one that heard her, so singular was the sweetness in the mere tone of her voice, and so fascinating the impression produced simply by her accent, while, by the goodness of her heart, evinced in one way or other towards

every being that came across her path, she rendered that love at first sight enduring. Perhaps, indeed, it would be a general truth if we added what a great writer affirms as the result of her own personal experience, and what the second picture will exhibit in a manner as forcible,—that those whom you love at first sight you love ever afterwards. At least there is much truth in what our Shakspeare says,

"Whoever lov'd, that lov'd not at first sight?"

Well, then, to cast a widely comprehensive glance on the whole matter that more immediately concerns our purpose, do you not perceive already how great, if not absolutely irresistible, must be the power that belongs to this method of instruction by example, so in harmony with nature when exercised by one who moreover has also the capacity which does not belong to all such persons for enjoying what is common, simple, and costless, such as a ramble through the fields, for which she was ever ready, say they, or a quiet little boating party on the Thames, though it were to be only a duet in a funny, when this power can be called into exercise in the very way that we require and are supposing,—a capacity which, notwithstanding her love for public brilliancy, she possessed to a supreme degree, so that to her friends, now mourning, each beautiful sequestered spot in our river and suburban scenery, each seat, each familiar tuft of trees,—familiar you might have thought only to some solitary student,—recalls her bright presence? The fact is, that there is sometimes, as in the instance before us, in persons as well as in things, an invisible charm, a natural grace, a goodness—and we by no means would limit its source—which brings things into a state of affinity with itself, though none of these qualities be defined or definable, since we can only try to express them by saying of each "an I-know-not-what;" for, as the poet demands, alluding to an attempt by sculpture to represent them, "What fine chisel could ever yet cut breath?" Well, a picture of this kind undoubtedly recalls an instance to show the impossibility. Hers were dictates of goodness, of generous candour, and of extraordinary sense, which had been all put to the test by difficulties and sufferings and barbarous usage. There was found in her a power of sympathy even with the noblest and

loftiest range of thought, an agreement of ideas, a conformity, a similitude in the appreciation of all things, which seemed to reflect the image of another rather than any thing belonging merely to her own individuality as far as you could detect its origin. Perhaps we could best express the sum of such a character by remarking what it was not. Examine, then, other people that are generally pleasing, giving your eyes and ears free liberty, or recall the absent, and think merely of whatever in lines or tints, or tones of voice, though it were only addressed to a dog, you happen to dislike in them; attend even to their choice of songs, to what they qualify as best and most amusing, to whatever strikes you in their disposition or faculties as defective, even when you have nothing positive to allege, whether it belongs to the form which you conceive a disposition ought to dictate, as in the manners that are visible, or to the sound of the voice either in speaking or laughing, or, as I have just said, in chiding a dumb animal, or to any of the movements of the figure, or to the expression of countenance,—contrast her, in short, with the peculiarities of others, each more remarkable in single oppositions, and "'tis the way to call hers excellent;" for here people have for their heart's content that which is the exact opposite of each slight matter that offends their exquisite inmost sense of right and fair. In this instance, with each who knows her, it is not

> "That ever in his fancy reigned supreme
> The ideal woman of a young man's dream;"

it is that, in this particular case, their very ideal embodied seems presented to their senses, and that they can touch what they might have thought existed only in their own mind. As we look at the picture, here you perceive is beauty, not diminished either, let us remark parenthetically, by singularly almond-shaped eyes, though what such indicate I know not. The form and expression of the face pleased every one, for, in fact, nature never bestowed upon mortality a more unblamed, a more harmonious feature; something of the fairy in it, if you understand what that means, but, what is not always found in combination with beauty, here is also grace,—that which you did not expect,

that which caused you the pleasure of surprise every moment. Her appearance, it is clear from the picture, promised much, but, unlike those who have only beauty, she paid more than she promised. The charm on these occasions is in the mind, which only shows its graces by little and little, and not in the surface which conceals nothing from the first. In this instance it was in the manner, without any mistake; and, as a great French author, whose words I employ, remarks, "manner is produced each moment, and can surprise you each moment." Beautiful she could only be in one way, as you observe it now, but charming such a person is in a hundred thousand ways which no pencil could delineate; for, in truth, persons of this kind are like a fancy embodied, and whatever in the most common way they say or do is, in spite of themselves, for they wish to be like others, stripped some way or other of the prosaic garb of reality. Some have said that your surprise in all such cases is produced by seeing that liberty which exists between the two extremes of constraint and affectation, and by observing how in the person before you both are avoided; for, the fact is, natural manners like hers, which you might think the easiest, are the most difficult of all to practise, and their realization in examples of this kind surprises and delights you, introducing you, as it were, into a new world of which before you had actually seen nothing. In fine, the ingenuousness which belongs to the graces of such a person is evidently a thing found and not sought, so that on the whole the influence that it exercises must be as fraught with intense pleasure to others as the lessons yielded to them by the same are varied and effective. People say that those who knew her intimately found it not only sweet but often very useful to see all that passed in the outward world day by day, as it were, with her eyes, which had the property of transforming things in a delightful way, and of adding a precious seeing to your own:

> "A waking eye, a prying mind,
> A heart that stirs is hard to bind.
> A hawk's keen sight ye cannot blind,
> Ye could not, Alice."

She could read life; its sweetest, tenderest, most innocent, as most chequered pages were legible to her. How few are there

who possess that faculty! At all events, while conversant with much that interests the intelligent youth of a great city, seeing every thing, and being in one way or another every where, without pretending to young Dumain's wit, which could make an ill shape fair, she discerned in people before her more that was good and beautiful than you would sometimes have been prepared perhaps, at first, to give them credit for. In fact, she seemed to regard utter strangers who happened to fall under her observation as if they were her own friends, having audible epithets for each to satisfy, as it were, her overflowing affection; the young person of either sex, and to a good age too, was always the "little dear," laying well the accent on the latter word, while kindness for those more grown up was expressed, not indeed by using "bedecking ornaments of praise," but by some exquisitely quaint term of rough, you would almost say coarse, disparagement that was transparently ironical; for hers on every occasion were

> "Sweet playful phrases, which would seem absurd
> To those who have ceased to hear such, or ne'er heard."

Nothing was lost on her; she would praise the very mould and frame of a hand, a nail, a finger, a foot, a face, an eye, a gait, a brow, a limb. We can certainly understand in general how her friends could learn from her to see things with her evident wish to be pleased, to speak of them even as if it were not they themselves but she who spoke, and like her to be able to penetrate below the surface; for she had a playful and delicious trick of calling their attention in an approving manner to what may be termed the innocent side of every thing, as in the instance of common people's ways, and even the æsthetic of their fashions in clothes, such as the humorous song takes note of when, with a nursery euphonism that sounds pleasant enough on a woman's tongue, it attests the short dresses which, as in the old painting, or the smirched worm-eaten tapestry, are now affected by the generality of your poor swell population. They tell us that in all truth she caused you to look upon the whole multitude in and about town as being only one joyous good-humoured family, of which every member possessed some estimable quality or

other to recommend him, a sentiment, by the way, quite worthy of a social animal like man born for society, insomuch that even the ancient Stoic makes it enter into the conditions of a wise and happy life, saying, "si mundum ut unam omnium domum spectat*." Her sociable disposition was never at rest; but for that matter it may be remarked in general that the majority in London have those continental tastes which belong to the foreign spirits that now come across the sea, as o'er a brook, to see fair England, causing them to like out-of-door pleasures without vouchers or disorder, though, as recognizable and avowable at least, they are not deemed suitable to the upper ranks of our home society, which, however, is no bar to the enjoyment of others whose minds can be transported by means of them to the sunny south. As for those personally known to her, they of course came in for a large share of her hearty good will, not without a little arch criticism all the time, which only seemed to express it after a way of her own. While seeming to take as much interest in the colour of a friend's neck-tie, or in the way he brushed his hair of an evening, as in the style of her own bonnet, which, to be candid, our informant owns, is saying a great deal, she made people almost cherish the little secret child-like peculiarities which she detected in their own habits, even ransacking their pockets to increase her inventory, by the sly though good-natured manner in which she looked at and laughingly exposed them; for there was nothing in life, even on the comic side of it, on which, as Montesquieu remarks, "the low must necessarily border," that did not seem to receive from her sharp glance and inimitable utterance simplicity and grace. But, by means of falling into such habits of observation, to speak honestly, is there not really as much permanent and solid advantage to the disposition gained, however lofty may be its general ways, as amusement for the merriest hour?

Then again, to touch a chord far more delicate, how much was there for some people to learn from the example of one who, under every possible disadvantage as regards the acquirement of supernatural knowledge, and moreover being still in the age of intuition, as some one says, rather than in that of attention,

* Seneca, de Beneficiis, lib. vii.

was pious, though it must be owned rather in a childlike way, in a way, however, that our Lord seems to have often noticed with approval, though in a manner, perhaps, still more diffident and bashful than is the attribute even of first youth, while daringly open and frank in every other regard, though you, perhaps, priding yourself on your diplomatic discernment, may have thought at times that she had not said all, when, poor thing, she had said all. In regard to religion it used to be remarked that she would never trust herself to speak of her impressions, which were as deep, perhaps, as they were delicate; and it was only by noticing casual things which could be traced to them, such as a book accidentally left upon her sofa,—the Bible, or a Catholic manual that had been given to her, for she had a Catholic servant, which you thought, perhaps, she never opened,—that you learned somewhat of the secret natural piety of her heart. An unlesson'd girl was she, according to every one's report, unschool'd, unpractis'd; happy in this, she was not yet so old but she might learn, and, happier than this, not born so dull but she could learn; happiest of all was, that her gentle spirit would have committed itself to be directed had she met with one so skilled a benefactor as to bestow, not alone what the philosopher calls "mortale munus," but in a higher sense than what he understood, the gifts that will endure. O then, indeed, she would have proved a lass unparalleled! a spirit most congenial with the sweet saint whose portrait is to follow. She had no reserve in common matters; like the wild charming madcap girl described in a celebrated work of recent autobiography, she never made use of common hackneyed tricks of deception and useless falsehood. For her part she had suppressed even puny lies altogether, because she thought them cowardly. She avowed all, and braved prudential objections; once or twice a year, meaning well, though 'twas no wit to go as to the mask in old Verona, like Imogen, changing fear and niceness, woman's pretty self, to a waggish courage, and so performing exploits in counterfeit attire that seemed to warrant them; but she did not look at things so near. She was in all respects of a daring spirit; and this was so true that people sometimes wondered how she could endanger her own interest by speaking with such freedom, and, in fact, it was only in

securing what might be to her personal advantage that her singularly inventive genius renounced its action. But any thing like flattery or trickiness, unless for sport, intended to be seen through, or dissimulation, or putting a varnish on one's own follies, was odious to her; and when she thought there were such dispositions in her presence, she took no trouble to conceal her womanly pride, as if muttering to herself, "Fly, damned baseness, to him that worships thee;" for she was good and sentimental, enthusiastic in her friendship, though appearing to be helpless at times in her aversions, while manifesting them, however, only in a mute and high-spirited disdain. Affectation of any kind seemed to belong to a different world from that in which she wished to live. The only thing in her at times that struck her friends as being put on was explosive anger. No one believed in the sincerity of her implacable wrath against any human being, though its manifestations, by a voice that was even then tender in its affected violence, yielded frequent pleasure to those who in her beheld one whom every thing became, to chide, to laugh, to weep, while she was in consequence at every one's mercy, being, in fact, so purely girlish that anger in her seemed laughable, loveable, and used only to make those who observed it like her ten times more for it, while few could withstand the influence of a disposition that was so eminently sociable, benevolent, and, above all, in the best sense of the term, natural. These fits, however, of displeasure, leading to a day's absence, did not, we are told, prove agreeable to herself; they used to cause her, on the contrary, bitter distress of mind, and there was no rest for her till she had shown that it was all made up again, which was not an affair, as you may suppose, that took her very much time; for, in fact, she was ever in a hurry to make it up, and be at peace with all the world.

What shall we say of her soft, easy, engaging manners, so good at sudden breaking out of mirth, as Armado says, even productive of that mad nervous laugh which nothing can stop, when no word can be articulated, and one can only indicate the cause by signs,—manners so invincibly playful, so exempt from all that is formal and needlessly conventional? What shall I say of her liberality to her friends, of her delicate attention and, if need were, charity to strangers, of her goodness to her ac-

quaintances,—for she sought to do a kind turn to every one,—of her equity to all? These things were known generally in her little circle, and how dear she was to every one belonging to it appeared in the grief with which her death was mourned, when it was thought that tongues spoke sweetly when they did name her name. Endowed with a true excellent woman's heart, in the private and more intimate relations of life she is said to have been affectionate to a degree that seemed sometimes rather to annoy as well as startle and perplex those who were dear to her, though it is not often, I should think, that people have to suffer that way. A singular instance of this sincerity in loving might be mentioned, as being presented in her last illness, for she actually refused ever again to see the physician who first attended her in it, and, in fact, she is reported to have left town with fiery quickness partly to avoid his visits, which had become odious to her for the sole reason that he had one evening criticized with a rough scornful air a certain object which was the work and gift of a friend. In happy times, it is said, she used to weep at every parting; and this, we are told, was unfortunately almost always a kind of public scene in the very street, in consequence of her resolution to accompany people as far as she could, never content with "the good bye at the door," but insisting on her seeing the last of them; her "deere charitie," as Sir Thomas More said of his daughter when telling her that he never liked her manner better, "having noe leasure to looke to worldlie courtesie," but feeling constrained to follow that custom of imparting a kiss, which, Erasmus said, was the old English usage whenever a friend took leave, "dedit osculum ex consuetudine gentis si quem dimittunt." In truth, people said, she was too fond, at least for these times, and therefore some might think her behaviour light; for in that respect, in spite of herself, who always shunned singularity, she was demonstrative to excess, and therefore, no doubt, they must have sometimes found themselves, notwithstanding the extreme delicacy under other circumstances of her social tact, placed before strangers in rather an awkward position, there being added also probably much suffering; for such true intense affection necessarily entails the results of reciprocity, or the poignant sorrow, not to say agony, which is consequent on the inevitable separations to which in

this life all of us are more or less liable. "But those who can only love," as a celebrated woman says, "are good for something; and the love of any one is a treasure." In general she had learned somehow, in an unaccountable way, complicated often as her position was, to be, without feigning or wishing to injure any thing of God's creation, kind to others, faithful to others, indulgent to others, unwilling to wrong any human being, while the pages that she secretly dwelt on with most fondness were those which told of the common sorrows of the poor. That was the page she used to turn down in order to recur to it. The page is still preserved in that condition. Unaccountable, repeats our friend, was the way in which was manifested her goodness, but this being truly a gift, possesses, as a great master says, "the aroma of infinitude, a peculiar manner of indication before which the soul of the observer is powerless; its silence even is eloquent, it moves us without being itself conscious of it." It was, moreover, impossible to know her, we are assured, without imbibing somewhat of her indulgent and tolerant spirit; for, besides the force of her example, people felt the need and excellence of that disposition when they beheld in her so many amiable and endearing qualities allied with so many great wants, for no one means to affirm positively and absolutely, or even, perhaps, to imply, that she was exempt from the latter, call them what you will, but all the result of circumstances beyond her control. Amerced of all visible sources of the supernatural, she was not of an age to combat the fever of imagination which sometimes obscured her admirable instinct of rectitude, having, besides, lived in a complete ignorance of the intellectual arms which it would have been necessary to employ for the purpose. Alas! men's judgments are a parcel of their fortunes. Her wants, therefore, suggest one of the very lessons which I said from the first are incidentally associated with the picture, as teaching the value of what she wanted, and the duty imposed on us all to make allowance for necessities, and to feel pity. Her wants were visible enough, and that, too, generally without even an attempt on her part to conceal them; but, independent of the divine consideration, how much more loveable even to every human eye are some for what they want, and know that they want, which can make defect perfection, than

are others for what they possess, or think they possess, which leaves them poor indeed! Then, again, ignorant, of course, in grave matters, for in England the lot of birth of necessity often involves in that condition some of the most loveable of the community,—ignorant, therefore, as Lacordaire says of our fellow-countrymen, but not erring through a resistance of her own personal heart,—ignorant of truth rather than contradicting it, having neither the opportunity nor the light which would, as we might suppose, render ignorance criminal before God,—ignorant as many of the unknown children who, according to the admirable expression of the Catholic doctrine, belong to the soul of the Church, and whom, as only victims of an hereditary and traditional error, that tender mother has always regarded with a maternal compassion,—in this sense only separated from her we might add, ignorant like many of the grave and learned who have the pretentions which were far from her without her grounds of excuse, full of respect, however, for the religion of others, or for what her own feminine reverential feelings taught her, without knowing very well the reason, to regard as being for them part of religion, no one found in that heart a dread or dislike of any thing really venerable; such, for instance, as the ancient faith of her country, though often with surprise and reluctance to credit what was spoken, she used to hear it prodigiously, insanely maligned; for in the depths of English society there are follies which seldom rise to be noticed by those who can give them much publicity; still there was persistence, every one observed, in her general impressions respecting it, and in thinking that what those whom she knew revered, might be, for all that was said in her hearing, true. There was not, indeed, as we have said and may well believe, a knowledge corresponding to her vague respect for it; and it is said she often expressed regrets at her own inability to enter into the sense of majestic ceremonies at which she used to assist alone, impressed with solemn wonder, without any one near to point out their meaning; but no one found it difficult to detect in her a greater liking for people in proportion as they spoke well of what, through a certain delicate instinct, she wished to revere, as did her young brother, who, though like herself a wanderer, used to defend it artlessly but passionately against its disparagers.

But now perhaps there will be an attempt by some to recover the wind of us, as if they would drive us into a toil, and to render all this irrelevant as far as concerns our alleged purpose in producing the picture, by calling off our attention from the merit which it possesses, to fasten upon details which do not concern us. Perhaps it is as well they do not know how much they err in this respect. Perhaps, as the orator in Shakspeare's drama says, I overshoot myself to tell them of it. Besides, it is to be feared that we often wrong the honourable men whose utterances, absolute and exceptionless, are always so directly aimed. They are, as he too said, wise and honourable, and can no doubt at all times with reason answer us. We had rather have such men our friends than enemies. In the present instance I would only say therefore to them, that they press our informant for details which, in strict truth, do not concern either us or themselves here—unless indeed in the sense of imparting the very lesson which in the beginning we said it was our object to suggest, warranting our hopes, as is noted by Richard of St. Victor in a passage formerly cited, where he speaks of their being in general expressly grounded on the fact of our imperfections being seen by the eyes of Him in whose book they are all written. No doubt, were we to enter formally and exclusively upon another order of reflections, it might be difficult, if not impossible, for our friend to give to some questioners a wholesome answer. Indeed, perhaps he could not; while, like Albany, "speaking what he feels, not what he ought to say." It would be necessary to adopt that style which satisfies only those who live on what Sainte-Beuve calls the "blanc-manger littéraire," which people like ourselves nauseate; since, in fine, when we have any thing to say, we like to say it otherwise, and to call things by their names; for that excess of refinement, producing these acts of linguistic complaisance, serve to mislead judgments, and, among other things, lead, as he says, to make saints of persons who were by no means such. The phrases in which it consists may be pretty; but they do not reveal the depth of the matter either for good or evil.

> "And, oftentimes, excusing of a fault
> Doth make the fault the worse by the excuse;

> As patches, set upon a little breach,
> Discredit more in hiding of the fault
> Than did the fault before it was so patch'd."

Whichever way our friend adopted, when called on to enter upon a sphere of reflections different from what belongs except incidentally to this place, it might be necessary to draw the curtain, to forget our miniature, and all the good results which can be obtained in a direct way by studying it. But even in cases where it may be well to comply with such an invitation, and give such answer as we can make, pleading for nothing but that we must and that we are at war 'twixt will and will not, though we should have to speak of some dark unknown figure who casts a black startling shadow before us, along a path, as it were, moonlit, that it has made lonesome, we may hazard the remark that in itself the matter still is blameless; for it does not follow of necessary consequence that what of good had been seen changes its nature, and under all possible phases becomes depreciated. It may then only be fraught with other lessons, the lessons to which we here only incidentally should refer. Under all the circumstances the good remains to be studied; for, as our wise poet says, good alone is good without a name; vileness is so, the property by what it is should go, not by the title. And more even than this is true; since, if you will hear our chiefest men of discipline, you can gather from their words that the very evils with which it is in these cases accompanied, have a tendency to correct and counteract themselves. "You are mistaken," says Massillon, for instance, "when you regard as dispositions irreconcileable with piety, these lively inclinations that seem born with certain persons for pleasure. These may become, when submitted to a higher influence, dispositions favourable to the interests of the soul. If pleasures that are false, or at least fleeting, have had attractions for them, those which are true and lasting will have more. If creatures have found them in their regard tender and susceptible, the unction from above will have an easier entrance into their heart. If they are born with a character easy, light, inconstant, it will be less difficult for them to detach themselves from what injures, and return to what preserves. Passions even," he continues, "may

become of themselves facilities in the work of that return. To have a tender, faithful, generous heart, is to be born for religion, and those whom creatures have moved must be accessible to grace. Read the histories of the canonized, and you will see that those who have been at first drawn aside by passions, who were born with lively inclinations for amusement and pleasures, the most foreign in appearance to piety, have been those in whom the greatest things have been subsequently operated. All their former tastes have become so many counter attractions. What led in the beginning to great disorders, led in the end to great submissions; and in the incomprehensible order of divine Providence and of His mercies, their very weaknesses were made to serve to their eternal sanctification and felicity*." To speak, however, in a common way, without mysticism, but with perfect seriousness, as well as frankness, there is, it is to be feared, in the world at all times, especially amongst those who are said to be well off in it, "while gentle, respectable, and fair," so much of what ought to be suspected as being only in its pretensions false virtue—so much of it at work even, perhaps, in the very reserves and cautions which dictate what I am now saying, as in all our late preambles,—there is so much of that formal righteousness which Christianity sternly condemns and threatens, and upon which the human heart even naturally would be slow to place much reliance, that possibly after all, who knows? there may be no great danger, in regard to the next world, of trangressing just limits, when there is a little mirror held up by our friend before people of that kind of virtue, of that type of the correct, before all of us in fact, in order that we may just see a contrast, while contemplating ourselves and our title to virtue, as a thing to trust in; and this little mirror is formed by a simple representation of what others were without that species of merit.

What's here unquestionably amiss, may it then for many reasons be gently heard. Of course, then, no one needs to be told that, speaking in general, a noble and a gentle nature may catch a wrench that turns all to bitterness, and that faults, contagious blastments, call them what you will, but still, often, in

* Sermon, Jeudi de la Passion.

the morn and liquid dew of youth, poor trespasses more monstrous standing by, are often visibly to be traced to an external and foreign cause, or to another person whose character may no way fall under our observation, though it may have been instrumental, after having been for an instant associated with it, in clouding, as far as concerns this life, a whole destiny, and that too even at the very bright moment when, as the poet says,

> "Notre âge échappait à l'enfance,
> Riante comme l'innocence."

As cowardly as it is selfish, the depraved sense does not attack man in his force, but in his weakness. It will not approach to tempt the being who can look at it in the face. It goes creeping like the worm of the earth, gliding among the flowers, which spring begins to open. It goes to solicit that which cannot defend itself; it comes to a weak creature, too easily seduced, as it was the first to seduce, and it presents itself to it under the external aspect of a sensitive heart. Hypocrite, it dares to put its hand on this region of the soul; and conceals the treason under the gestures of love and of fidelity; then, the hour past, it abandons the victim—departs, deserting the love that it has caused, to console its own disgust by a disgust which is only about to begin. "What oppression is there in the world if this be not oppression? and what ruins are there if this is not to count amongst them?" Yes; well might Lacordaire ask the question. What ruins are in these that can be found by him not ruined? Then is he the ground of their defeatures. Alas! they have but as offended in a dream. What concerns us more immediately is the fact, that here is an instance of one free, humanly speaking, from the least movement of a malicious and evil will; for if not by her intelligence, at least by her will, there was a certain equation between her and rectitude; for it is the privilege of free will to extend its horizons as it wishes, and to wish beyond what the understanding clearly conceives. We might say therefore, perhaps, with the same reserve, according to the lines just cited, that here was one innocent. Fretted, swayed to and fro from childhood, the life of emotions was no doubt developed in her intensely, and without ceasing, so as to become necessary almost. Like those delicate charming plants, as some

one says, which spring up and flourish for a day or so from the rock to which they are attached, under the foam of the cataract, this exquisite nature, always bent under the weight of sorrows, opened to the least ray of sunshine, and sought with avidity the breath of life around her, however fugitive, and however inundated with dangers. Unused to forethought, she found in the force of her imagination, and in the ardour of her mind of a day, the illusions of an hour, followed, however, too often, by the astonishments of simplicity, and by deep regrets. All with her was impassioned, friendship, devotion, indignation, when made for a moment wild by base ingratitude, and this too even after she had been screened at last from the desolating force of the torrent, and had thought herself re-established, as our friend says, in a state that was compatible with security, where she could love unseen, or loving die. "It was in her character," he says, "to be over sensitive alike to what charmed and to what pained her." Each day had its gleams, succeeded by the shade cast over her spirit on being confronted with the little insignificant contrarieties of real life. The depth of her emotions, as some one remarks, was therefore not proportioned to their causes; but such is the destiny of all persons in whom the nervous system is developed to excess, and who are left without a controlling knowledge. Still, each day the bright dreams of early years seemed to return. Gay she was ever, as the lamb that frisks it in her own sweet Suffolk fields, those classic fields one might call them, as associated with the fame of Gainsborough, ever full of hope, and snatching at the least twig that can support it, to realize some dream of virtuous happiness,—quick in regard to every thing as to her musical ear, expansive and impressionable. How many such wild flowers out of the country, each of whom, once mistress of the field, on being transplanted, have had, when only just putting forth the tender leaves of hopeful expectation, to feel their root nipped, and to hang their heads and perish! 'Tis with them still early days! But even, in such cases, remember the solemn words of St. Jerome, cited before we undrew the curtain, and seal up the mouth of outrage; for if we could clear up these ambiguities with which they are encompassed, and know their spring, their head, their true descent, and above all, if you reflect on what is

provided by Heaven to meet the evil, then would you be struck dumb in regard to condemnations, even before you hear of sufferings and death. Moreover, though persons, content with the morality of "what-will-they-say?" void of pity and of intelligence, may dislike to hear it suggested, "there is," as a celebrated woman remarks, "in the life of the obscure certain illusions and misfortunes which the rich can seldom understand, and which they judge of as the blind appreciate colours." It is not, come now, that we yield assent to "the excellent foppery of the world," and suggest that when they are sick in fortune they are so by heavenly compulsion, by spherical predominance, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; but that still in those cases there is somewhat to allege in extenuation, which opinion argues no disposition to evade a difficulty. Besides, were it otherwise, when cast off into the staggers and the careless lapse of youth, the kind of servitude that follows, as an ancient philosopher said of that which is merely outward and social, does not always necessarily descend into the whole man. The better part may be free—"mens quidem sui juris." The mind may have still generally such liberty that nothing can hold it, but use it must its own impetus—"et in infinitum comes cœlestibus exeat." Fortune may have power for awhile to command what is tangible, but the interior part may not have been wholly made over to its power. Accordingly, when you come to our immediate instance, even without hearing those who, like our friend, dipping all her faults in their affection, work like the spring that turneth wood to beauteous semblances, there was no period, even during the exceptional moment, in which many of the purest graces could not have been imbibed by observing the living original, exposed, as no doubt it was, to be chastized with the sober eye of dull and pitiless severity; for, besides possessing a naturally exquisite sense of right and wrong in common with the majority of her sex, she had an instinctive horror, which seemed to be enhanced every day by her own keen observation of contrasts for all that could not be identified with a thing of beauty and of goodness. There was more than resistance to what is wrong. There was the movement opposed to the fault, the revolt of the entire soul against the egotism of evil. She did the good which she could, even when it was foreign to the

ill which seemed to possess her, as if her prayer had been that Heaven to her might send, "Not to pick bad from bad; but by bad, mend." True, there was the mirthful temper which harmonizes so well with this. There was the excellent wit, the merry heart of Shakspeare's Beatrice; had she dreamed of unhappiness she would have waked herself with laughing; she had more of the wild-goose in one of her wits than her friends had in their whole five, and each time she seemed to show the whole wealth of her fun in an instant. With a fund of fixed, deep feeling, under a bright sparkling surface, she evinced a varying childishness, that daily showed itself in skirmishes of wit, huddling jest upon jest with such impossible conveyance, that he who met her stood like a man at a mark with a whole army shooting at him, with all manner of shot, minion, saker, culverin, or any thing, what thou wilt. Sometimes, too, if such an analysis did not escape us through the simplicity of its detail, and its minuteness, we might relate how that playful childishness used to find vent in actually lifting him bodily from the ground, as if to show what strength high spirits can impart to the slightest frame, or as if to accomplish, even through fun, in both ways, the art which she undoubtedly possessed of raising another above the earth he trod on. With all that light versatile playfulness, which each moment, as it were, won a fresh victory over those who were the objects of it, more delicate, more tender, more disinterested, more apt to receive religious impressions, and better in every respect, there is perhaps reason to believe, before the eye of Heaven, than she either thought or gave herself out to be, it was of course easy for any one to detect what was deficient in her, without using a magnifying glass, while, through ignorance of her early history, mistaking her real disposition, and, while mounted on his great horse, declaiming with eloquence, misconstruing her whole character; but there was still the diamond fragments for all their penetration and blunders and rhetoric. Born with the gift of those virtues, and charms, and influences, which religion, understood by a noble intelligence, can develope and preserve, or else restore when withered, giving them vital growth again, there was the pure germ of disinterested goodness, that is not so commonly found in the world of those that are thought the most exemplary, operative, as

spiritualists even would desire, though under a mask that was, for its human loveliness and natural good, still pleasing, while it concealed not for an instant her disgust at every thing which sullied the beauty of her heart's ideal; the law of which, for that matter, we may add parenthetically, by way of putting all youth upon its guard, and she would have been among the first to say it, constitutes the happiness as well as the order of the universe. Well, we may be said on this one grave point to have heard all. You cannot take this for an answer, sir? Then, though he has sought to report her and her cause aright, to those who are still unsatisfied our friend will give no other. But let them depart without expecting compliments, since they seem to forget that, for one thing or another, we shall all have to render up accounts; and, consequently, that, in the strictest sense of the term, it is a moral act when any one suggests, by means of such a narrative, that it will be well for them, instead of trying to sum up the debts of others, to keep their arithmetic exclusively for a survey of their own.

But, averting our eyes now from shadows which, however fearful, have in reality nothing to do with our immediate argument; for besides that they are cast by some one who passes on with a different object, what is good may, as we have just said, be always studied in itself, without taking into account, in any particular instance, its accidental and momentary accompaniments, let us, leaving undrawn the curtain, return to what is of general import, and consider again how many lessons of humanity could be learned from keeping in mind the real original disposition and manners of such a person, or rather the type and the ideal. What concerns us, during our rambles, on all occasions of the kind that we are supposing, is that which, to speak in general, is met with in daily use and in common life, as a thing to be practised and imitated by all, not an order of things which can be imagined or, as exceptional though needful as such, wished for; it is to find that which we observe commemorated, not alone in our biographies, but even on the stately pages of Cicero — that "suavitas quædam sermonum atque morum," which he qualifies as the food of affection—it is to find from cheerful eyes a ray that, as Lamb says, can strike a bliss upon the morning, a bliss that will not leave us. It is to find

that counsel which on even ordinary occasions, so connected are such often with highest things, can do us golden service; that friendship which will be ready at every turn when we need its guidance through the worldly labyrinth, and its encouragements, when we seek to burst through its odious trammels, friendship which suffers the mind of another neither to be cast down nor to lose its independence and its energy, which renders life vital, as poor old Ennius said, by the sweetness of mutual affection, and which even proves its virtue by the friendship it elicits; since after all, without virtue, friendship, such as was here produced, cannot exist even in a dream. Endowed then with all the common features of humanity, to a degree that would be remarkable in any condition of life, she loved her parents with somewhat of a religious reverence, having lost her mother in childhood, keeping things that had belonged to her, and to her grandmother, as if they were relics; she loved to a kind of madness her brothers and sisters, they were as lambs that did frisk i' the sun, and bleat the one at the other. She made every one that knew her contemplate with fondness that English country life of which she used to speak so often, when recurring to the memory of her "childhood's dear and happy home." Her tales produced the kind of impression that you receive from looking at a painting by Edouard Frère, the tenderest and truest painter of the life that she once knew—whose pictures are genuine idyls, full of poetry, but with no touch that is not faithful to humblest hearts. She forgave without speaking of it those who, in later years, took advantage of her sorrows; and there were many sorrows that she had to suffer during her short quick transit through time. This is not an occasion for relating the history of a life, however short, with regard to the time of its mortality. But then we undertook from the first to show that what is brilliant is not always, in the sense of the world, happy; and since there is here an instance in point, for this existence that the ancients, in consideration of its intense ideality, might have thought perhaps devoted to the Graces, was in its brightest hours full of tears, alarms, and disappointments; since, I say, it would be hard to find a more impressive example on this very point, needs must we proceed with details which would otherwise be irrelevant. Whoever suffers without repining, let

brief antecedents even be what they may, is perhaps a person to be envied. Such experience seems to impart a character. It is, we are assured by those who have authority to speak, the most favourable of all symptoms with regard to the sufferer. It seems, even to our eyes, to raise up a monumental example out of dust and ashes. It seems to send the bright and beautiful to the foot of the cross—"in quo est vita, salus et redemptio nostra," that is, in other words, to the gate of Heaven. It seems to tell all who observe it, that there is in store for the individual an entrance there, and mirth for ever and ever. Well, all this is presented in the instance before us; and during her last two years she used to be told so; for not to anticipate the final days that were steeped in anguish—days perhaps which constituted that eleventh hour with all its blessed consequences, of much harshness, cruelty, injustice, baseness, and ingratitude, —oh! the hideous catalogue,—was she successively the victim. It presents a disagreeable aspect of life in those walks which are the farthest removed from the influence of ambition, from which we would always gladly turn away our eyes, when instances occur of people seeming to be in league together to worry and hunt down unoffending persons, as if wishing to leave them, for all their attempts, no available way of advancing to what may be an object of laudable desire, at times perhaps not even a tranquil spot to rest a poor distracted head in. Something of this kind, according to reports, was presented here. There were circumstances which seemed to warrant her fear, though, our friend says, she would forget it the moment after expressing it, when she thought herself pursued through an interested and malignant curiosity, for the world always suspects and seeks to pry through jealousy into whatever it discovers instinctively to be in any respect above itself. But even, had it been otherwise, it is certain, as they tell us, that you could learn from her example to foster a certain indifference for what does not belong to the sphere of ideas, or in other words for mere worldly advantages, and, through the enchantment of loving the beautiful and the good, an insensibility to all the baser motives of mankind; for it seemed as if nothing that entered into the latter could very much affect her. It was evident too, we are told, that not even the advantages which are generally desired and

thought fruitful in happiness, could sweeten for her the path of this mortal life. Nay, the very realization partly of her own wishes in latter years, appeared, it is said, mysteriously to fail in yielding her any permanent satisfaction, while, as for mere money, and "gaining what many men desire," her acquaintances used to hear her say, like Sir Thomas More himself, that she often felt as if she would like to fling it out of the window. Beauty in its ideal, love in its sublime intensity, truth, and justice, in their divine perfection—that is what she seemed created for, what she certainly aspired to breathe; all the rest appeared to her nothing. Her centre, her climate was elsewhere. And what a sequel is that for all? Ah! yes; we are intended for higher things.

In fine, you can hardly look long at this poor little miniature without growing somewhat thoughtful, and that too perhaps in a way which might lead to practical results of importance to yourself, while you think upon her destiny. Yes; we might even here finish with a good result, draw the curtain close and say, like Henry, "Let us all to meditation." To see her so laughing, so careless, and so in the air, as the French say, you might be inclined to suppose she was one of those foolish ones who never thought of any thing; and yet notwithstanding she was thoughtful, and well might you pity the dearth that she had pined in, longing for the food that was to her mind denied. That sense, however, which existed in her of the worthlessness and unreality of earthly things in one so young, and so singularly disposed to joyfulness, is enough both to surprise and to yield instruction; for in fact nothing could be more impressive, even before you could repeat in allusion to her the inimitable lines of Lamb,

> "My sprightly neighbour, gone before
> To that unknown and silent shore!"

The world and the fanatically austere, of course, will say on these occasions just what either likes; but it appears to some that the most probable way of accounting for such facts is to believe that those who are led to this conviction must have possessed in the depths of their souls qualities which, for some reason or another, are dear to Heaven; reason additional, by the

way, why other people should condescend to value such friendship, and study to imitate the unquestionable graces of natures like hers. Being then, as one may venture to suggest, dear in some way to Heaven, it was necessary that they should suffer here below—suffer in fact for their faults; necessary that they should "drink of the torrent" by the way side, or, in other words, necessary that, in spite of their inclination to exuberant gaiety, and to dwell with flowers, they should be left with only thorns to handle, and pass through what is mentally, at least, most bitter in this life. Accordingly, suffer in this manner she did, and that too most intensely at the time, when years were beginning to make her more thoughtful, and to verify the hopes of those who cared for her, causing her to be serious at intervals; and though it was not in her nature to be long grave, and still less sad, leading her to regard with more reflection the things which had pleased her youth, or rather, for she was still quite young, her childhood, and to love already what we may hope she now loves alone, or, if it were allowable to add, above all the rest that she had ever loved, which she has learned to love formally at last, like others from the commencement blessed, in One.

There was, however, a peculiarity in her mind with respect to what the invisible world involves, which perhaps should not be passed over in silence. Like the vast majority of the English who are unsophisticated, impressed with a general belief in the supernatural around them, there could also be observed in her, at times, a certain febrile exaltation, which seemed to partake of an occult influence, enabling her almost to read the future. She would spurn at straws, and speak things in doubt that carried but half-sense. Her speech was nothing, yet the unshaped use of it did move the hearers to collection. They aimed at it, and botched the words up fit to their own thoughts, which, as her winks, and nods, and gestures yielded them, made them almost think there might be thought in them, though nothing sure, yet much unhappily. She communicated at times, in a half merry or doubting way, with dreams, and it is undeniable that her predictions, or rather her presentiments and vague forebodings, for she pretended to possess no means of secret knowledge that could not be gained by every one, were sometimes in

a most singular manner verified. She had floods of tears for events before they happened—events which on common grounds could not possibly have been anticipated by any one, and she seemed to know already the general nature of the heavy news which her overwhelmed friends had later to communicate respecting themselves. How could this be? Mere coincidence, of course, some will reply. A foolish, dreaming, superstitious girl makes all these bodements. Well, be it so; but at all events, you can understand how occasional confidence in this respect must have added a certain air of impressive wildness to the freshness of her character. But with much of this we have no concern. Let us return to what is fruitful in lessons for every one, not excepting those who are on their midsummer rambles.

It is clear then from the first that she, of whom we speak, possessed a nature which nothing in this world could satisfy, so as to induce oblivion of the next in the secret depths of her soul. People found her often solitary, with tears in her eyes. "What on earth has happened? Why do you weep?" "I do not know," she would reply, smiling. "There are days when the heart is full, and it must have vent. I am better after it." Was it that, left to her single sorrow, there was nothing generally in the heart of others which corresponded with what was in her own? Perhaps this was one reason; for, besides that, few natures are so sensitive as hers, stateliness in many is found to ignore the voice of nature. But if so, let the world answer for it; and without much pain or wonder, one can look forward to the probability of its proving one day or other, in some such cases, for those who have helped to diffuse its notions and consolidate its empire, a very heavy reckoning. However, without entering upon that question, which, for other reasons is unquestionably complicated, feeling from the beginning the insufficiency of human things to make her happy, she was brought, in a common way, to a sense also of their instability at an early age, by a long and dangerous illness. After this first attack, from which she had perhaps never thoroughly recovered, for during the brief subsequent interval of imperfect convalescence, when seeing her through a feebleness that she tried to conceal, touch each wall as she passed on to visit a motherly friend, who

lived near her, people used to ask, "Is Alice growing blind?" After partially recovering, we ought to say then, from this fever which entailed on her the loss of her beautiful hair, she seemed, it is said, to a marvellous degree for one so young, so cheerful and impressionable, to have familiarized herself with the thought of death. It had no terrors for her, either before its arrival or at its visible approach. Indeed, all through life, in her sense, 'twas happiness to die. I know not why we should shrink from mentioning the circumstance which is related of her last year, that she used to keep among her pretty dresses the shroud, white as the mountain snow, which the same friend and neighbour just spoken of had made for her on that occasion; and even, in moments of confidential gaiety, to produce it smilingly, stretching it on the floor in order to show, as she said, her height, the tallness of the slight figure, which required such a length in what was to cover it, when to the grave it was to go bewept with true-love showers. It really looked as if she was not far from thinking of literally obeying the words addressed to Jerusalem, "Exue te vestibus jucunditatis, induere cinere et cilicio." But a year later, though still bidding others "hope for better times," and in fact just as her prospects were more promising, and her whole nature becoming more and more developed in a right direction, turning past evils to advantages, there was a failing of strength, for which she thought that a change of air was necessary. The evening before she set out she experienced, says our friend, a paroxysm of vague grief, and an hysterical burst of weeping, uncalled for by any thing visible to others, who instantly removed any conceivable difficulty that might interpose. The next morning she left town with cheerful gaiety, but on the day after her arrival on the coast, she had again to take to her bed; and this time it appears to have been with a presentiment, which, notwithstanding what was visible, to say the least, was most singular. During her short career, having been repeatedly obliged to change her residence, she now wrote to a friend, alluding to her many past vexations of that kind, saying, with a kind of half-mirthful allusion to former troubles, that now she had to lie down and stray no further, that here was her journey's end, the butt and very sea-mark of her utmost sail. "This will be my last house," she wrote; "the weather is fine; but I lie

stretched within doors, and all the comfort I have is to watch the sky and think of a better and more peaceful world than this is." Such was her poor natural way of saying "Levavi oculos meos in montes, unde veniet auxilium mihi. Auxilium meum a domino qui fecit cœlum et terram." May not the aspiration, however expressed, have been received where hearts are seen? Her thoughts for her sister lately married were all about future happiness in store for that beloved one, which might efface the memory of herself. This, she said, in allusion to it, smiling, is what will enable you to forget me. Could self-denial, in the highest mystic sense, be carried farther? Meanwhile the foreboding letter, it is said, troubled no one, for the reason that at the best of times she was accustomed to speak playfully of her death as likely to occur when people least expected it. Naturally nervous, as we said from the first, and full of fears, without seeming to be troubled by them, she was thought on this occasion, they tell us, to be only giving way to them without grounds. Humble enough at all events she was; and we are told, you know, that a contrite and humiliated heart God will not despise. "I wish," she added, "I could say I am happy and prepared to go; but there are few who can say that, although I hope soon to be released from my pains, where I shall suffer no more. God bless you; take my kisses, and may His will be done." Two weeks, it appears, elapsed without bringing to her some whom it is said to have been her wish to see; some, of whom she used often to affirm in her positive way, admitting of no contradiction, that she owed her life to them; some, whose slightest deeds to speak had been her music. "I know," she is reported to have said, "that they would come if they could; it is that they cannot come"—the fact being, we are told, that, besides an existing impossibility, for it seemed to be in her destiny to be encompassed by conflicting necessities, they had no knowledge of her being in danger till it was too late to have found her living. The day for her return to town was even named; and all her friends were expecting soon to welcome her back. As for the letter, people accounted for it by saying it was only that her nerves were in their infancy again, and had no vigour in them; and besides, the truth was, she had borne her sickness with such sprightliness, for it did not seem to inter-

rupt her girlish love of fun, that no one thought it grave. So they came not; and if she wanted, visibly at least, other ministry, other consolation, that which alone is vital, not her will, poor victim, but her country three hundred years before apostatizing was to blame. I think the proposition is established with which we set out—that what we call bright or brilliant is not always, even in the human sense of the term, happy. How early in life had Fortune and she parted! shaken hands, as it were, and now all come to this! I think that so far her experience at least verified the poet's assertion,

> "That Love, and Hope, and Beauty's bloom,
> Are blessings gather'd for the tomb;
> There's nothing bright but Heaven!"

She left the world, however, without agony in her sleep, a sleep like that of a child, as sound as careless infancy. So there was an unexpected and abrupt end to the hopes of her friends respecting the future, in which, however, strange to say, she, as if guided by the sensitive faculty already noticed, never would herself participate. The rest is silence. Our brother, writes a surviving sister, has been to see me, but he was very dull, and he said that London without sprightly Alice seemed somehow quite altered for him at least, and become a different place; so, thinking doubtless of the silent land to which she is "gone before," he departed for his country home again. Yet both, like her, were resigned to bear this work of Heaven.

> "Car le ciel avait au trépas
> Condamné ses jeuns appas.
> Au ciel elle a rendu sa vie,
> Et doucement s'est endormie,
> Sans murmurer contre ses loix.
> Ainsi le sourire s'efface;
> Ainsi meurt sans laisser de trace,
> Le chant d'un oiseau dans les bois *."

The exquisite and indefinable simplicity of these lines seems appropriate to describe such a departure, we need not say death,

* Parny.

for in one sense there is no such thing for any one as death,—no one dies; and our words should be measured as if always in presence of the living. To her at least our friend will apply the lines of Lamb, and say,

> "A year or more hath she been dead,
> Yet cannot I by force be led
> To think upon the wormy bed
> And her together."

Such is a slight sketch of what that friend with private soul, though in the beaten way of friendship, would thus recount to you; such is the picture that for its intrinsic innocence at least you may like,—such the portraiture of what, perhaps, our old poet meant when he talked of the mislaid one; but it almost looks as if our Perdita were found—found, without perhaps, great presumption, we may think it, just as all the frights and anxieties, and distresses and miseries, and darkness and ignorance, and wants of the night of this life were passing off for ever, or, to speak still more figuratively, at "peep of day." When creatures bright and fair are seen taken off thus, perhaps with all their blossoms and juvenile follies flush as May, it is not for man to pronounce absolutely, since how all such audits stand, who knows save Heaven? But, by your leave, when those we speak about are gone, we may remember that it never yet did hurt to lay down likelihoods and forms of hope, and in the circumstance and course of thought which some experience, 'tis light with them; for merciful Heaven does rather with its sharp and sulphurous bolt split the unwedgeable and gnarled oak than the soft myrtle; and, indeed, mercy, we are expressly told, is granted to the little,—"Exiguo conceditur misericordia*." What Heaven does delay, it not denies. How much more reason is there then for cherishing, in sight of the cross, a belief that mercy will be vouchsafed to those who are not like other people cold and calculating, and consciously resisting holy influences, in the state, at all events, of the lukewarm, which we are told in mystic books, as in the conferences of Cassian, is the worst and most detestable of all mortal conditions to the eyes of Heaven,—who

* Sap. vi. 7.

are not like so many clinging to naturalism and all its errors through ambition perhaps, through a hope to rise by caring for nothing of the soul, or conforming to the ways of others, in slow obduracy, perhaps studied infidelity, and ceaseless gloomy pride that ignores all spiritual wants,—how much more ground for hope, I say, when, unlike all these, their littleness has been mysteriously steeped and purified in the pains of a long sickness, in the disappointments of an affectionate heart, and in all the unfathomable intensity (analogous with regard to the great Passion) of youthful sorrow!

Reader, these details seem to have transported us, I know not how, from her picture to her grave, which, they say, is in an open field, having in view at a great distance the Reculvers. It is on the verge of the yellow sands, where oft with the morning's love she had made sport, and where last year, at this very season, she is said to have sat with friends and felt herself one of the liveliest of the cheerful throng. It is, they say, a lone grave, a deserted grave, dust and oblivion; the lark alone sings near it. No fancies now within her call, no gambols, no flashes of wit and merriment,—a silent spot; far from those whom she loved, far from all who knew her. Are you in imagination standing by it? where some Ophelia, visiting it at long intervals, would say, "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; and there is pansies, that's for thoughts." Then I would venture to add with the poet,

> "Oh! lightly tread upon this sod,
> And breathe for her one gentle prayer,
> Remember who this low earth trod,
> To purchase peace for such as err,
> Man has no mercy; yet in heaven
> Will some be seen like her forgiven *."

Our friend has told his tale, and methinks 'tis a moment now like that when I first heard it, which Longfellow seems to describe in the lines—

> "He ended: and a kind of spell
> Upon the silent listeners fell.

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* Poems by C. F. S.

His solemn manner and his words
Had touched the deep mysterious chords
That vibrate in each human breast
Alike, but not alike confess'd."

But as soon as a touch of that pity which in a more intense degree, to suit a case that was thought not to admit of hope, caused Dante to fall like a corpse upon the ground,—as soon as tears now, this time, in right earnest, for all this while our friend's heart may, perhaps, again have found a heart to respond to it,—as soon, I say, as compassion, in a silence which every one must like as the more showing off its depth, will suffer you to turn your thoughts from this pencilled figure, or from this grave, to yourself, and to the advantages which your own character might have derived from your knowing and copying the graces of a person so constituted, I would ask you to take a general glance back at it, and, forgetting if you can the unutterable grief of others, to consider how many disagreeable not to say odious elements, that must be more or less fatal to all attempts at realizing a bright serene hour, to speak of nothing else of far higher import, might have been corrected by observing, watching, and practising the qualities and manners now recalled by a faint sketch of such a slight unpretending creature; for this question will bring us back to the present business that is now upon us, and to those conclusions without which the late narrative had been in itself at the best impertinent. Certainly, if these dispositions, manners, and characteristics be viewed apart from what saddens, and from reflections which do not belong to this place in a direct way, they might be applied to a good purpose by persons of the most grave virtue. There are moral studies of a very solemn description, and of very high pretensions, that might not, perhaps, profit them so much as would the little secret occupation which consisted in watching and copying one by one these minute traits of character which put noblest, ay, and holiest, virtues wanting them, if they can ever want them, to the foil,—these delicate graces of every day exercise which agree so well with the influence of the supernatural on the human conduct, and which, when we consider the consequences of their absence in persons of formal piety, we may

venture to call adorable, — these generous appreciations each moment of persons and things,—these charming unpretending ways of speaking and acting through life which dispose those who have converse with them to cheerfulness and the love of God,—these affections, which only needed direction to have repeated before us by means of them the kissing and anointing of the blessed feet, dispositions of the heart's inmost core which cannot be concealed, which have corresponding outward expressions that no one can mistake, so engaging, so homely, and at the same time spiritual, so natural in the best sense, so easily transfigured, as it were, by a touch from heaven, so diffusive of serene enjoyment which can harmonize with whatever is most elevated and immortal,—with whatever is loved by Christians with the fullest soul, while causing you practically to abhor pride, to love alike persons of every degree (no despicable result even if there were to be nothing else), causing you to regard with a certain respectful tenderness every woman,—the young as in some points at least resembling her, the aged as having been, perhaps, once like her,—and even endearing to you more than ever, and to a degree, in fact, that passes all utterance, the influence which she wanted while formed for it, the absence of which caused all her sorrow,—and with that, the nation to which such a person belonged, the language that she spoke, and also those who speak it, so that you would only be where it is spoken and even pronounced as she spoke it, or, in brief and in other words, Catholicity, and seen under its indulgent ever hopeful inspiration, England, your country itself.

But come, draw the curtain; this picture has moved us all too deeply; our friend would be sorry if it has offended you, though it can have done so only through your being too fixedly anchored on the particular figure without grasping also the wide consideration of general importance that was to follow from it. If we had thought the sight of this poor image would have wrought on some, as very probably it has, we'd not have showed it. Let's talk no more of sad things. Some shall be pardoned, and some punished. Extend your pity to those who living could not but love her, and being dead, with funeral praises would ask others thus to help them to adorn her tomb.

"If we shadows have offended
Think but this (and all is mended),
That you have but slumber'd here,
While these visions did appear;
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend;
Do you pardon; we will mend."

We have seen a creature of God endowed with those created charms which grace would not destroy. What, we ask again, would have been that creature if transfigured, if submitted to the influence of the supernatural? That which you are about to behold will enable you to answer this question.

Then, oh, tears of the purest soul flow now with those of the heart! The second miniature, and this time it is the harmony of sacred choirs we should hear,—the second miniature is, as I said, of a different type; it demands another current for our thoughts, and needs no preamble, unless it be such music, before producing it as an instance of what may be learned from associating with the gentler sex. Perhaps, strange as at first this order of observation may appear, we should not ascribe to mere chance, however at first unpremeditated on our part, or to a coarse and unartistic fancy, the fact of these two being viewed in juxtaposition; for whatever a certain sense, which I scarcely know how to qualify, may feel or pretend in regard to this order, the more we reflect, the more, perhaps, we shall esteem it well and fitting, at least in solemn moments as in these when taking up the likenesses of persons who are gone, to see and to remember those whom we are disposed most to venerate side by side, as they would have themselves wished to be, at the foot of the Cross, along with those whom we are constrained the most to pity. But, as I said, the portrait will kindle a different light in all who look at it. Here is represented one who but yesterday was the charm and, I might almost add with truth, the wonder of all who knew her,—exquisitely beautiful, deeply intelligent, accomplished too, not as wishing to be so, but through the necessity of her nature, of an adorable innocence that every look, and gesture, and word, and change in the tone of voice in a most singular manner betrayed, having, as one of her friends

said, "le *don* d'être aimée." The sweetest of girls, to speak in a common way, and yet uniting these delicate human graces with what is above all wonder and all earthly charms, namely, the sanctity of God moving in a heart that sought with intelligence to be perfect as He is perfect,—she has but just left us for the world beyond those shining orbs she loved to contemplate, for the world to which she had always looked silently in the depths of her nature as being her country and her home. But let us view the picture closely as the last. You will see that the subject requires quite a different hand. The former might have employed the pencil of a Titian or a Raphael in his latest style; the one now before us demands the genius of the blessed Angelico, and yet it is not altogether mediæval, there is with the antique the fresh human natural charm as well. Placing it then before you, unveiled at once, with love unutterable, we may, in allusion to the immediate and fully developed character, even while vested with mortality, of her whom it represents, affirm that one of the constant standing miracles of Christianity, inexplicable,—like the corn, like the flowers, but surpassing all things, though, like all others of God's best gifts, common,—is goodness in this form, goodness charming, spontaneous, yet supernatural, such as we cannot contemplate without a sort of ineffable sentiment made up of admiration, love, and pity; for, I am sorry still to add, it is often allied with suffering, oftener than with what *we* mean by serene hours. But in that very pity there is matter for us to consider; for, not to speak of those false spiritualists who seem resolved not to pity human things, men, rough and selfish as they too often are, find it difficult naturally enough to feel much compassion for one another, for beings like themselves, let what will happen to them. But if one of these delicate, noble, dignified, and tender beings loving God, and that is what makes it so mysterious, be seen to suffer, and these same coarse men find out that the deepest and most overwhelming, and most poignant of all the passions which flesh is heir to, if it be a passion, which I rather doubt, is pity, when they can say of themselves in that line of Virgil which no other language, perhaps, can render,

"Sunt lachrymæ rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt;"

for, look you now at our Mary Anne Letitia, or at others of her type. Innocent, she cannot but love this mortal life of the family. In spite of her aversion for vulgar base realities, every thing about her, in one sense, is paradise, for it exists in God, and is a vestibule of eternity. Stretched on a couch of pain, she has therefore her serene hours to make her love this existence, chequered as it is. She has accordingly her smiles for every one; she has her enraptured welcome for the coming friend, her pleasant easy chat with him, her girlish jests, her arch observation of all that passes; she laughs, and makes all around her laugh; the very incidents of her wakeful nights, poor thing, she turns to arch pleasantry and mirthful anecdote. And then to think of that need of loving, unknown to herself, which Lacordaire says is so great in pure hearts,—to think of all her successive bereavements, and yet, on the other hand, to hear expressed her temporal hopes that are so human amidst all this resignation to the will of God,—her wish even to stay longer here for the sake of others, her "thank God" so often uttered when any improvement in health can be imagined, her consent to endure whatever is most repulsive for the sake of its recovery merely through the love of those around her, while they could only divine her aspirations after God and the heaven where so many of those she loved were waiting for her. Oh, lads and lasses! having "mollissima corda," as the poet says, oh, the pity of it! all pure and angelic, and ripe for an eternity of bliss as she appears to us to be, still, oh, the pity of it! Yes, mortal things touch the mind, and all the elements that ever entered into pity are found in them here, that is, in the long sufferings, the earthly hopes, and premature death of this holy, amiable, grateful, tender, dutiful, and perfectly human creature. Talk not to those loving her of a happy release by her being torn from them. They would have kept her with them even in the state in which she lies stretched before them as long as they themselves are in the world; for still her innocence imparts a charm to life; while, more than this, they would wish, if it were lawful to express it, that they might themselves perish, providing only they could but see her for a moment painless and happy. Is not such pity a thing to wonder at and to reflect upon, as requiring, though elicited by things mortal, we might

say, infinity, that is, God, to contain it all? Yes, the debt of commiseration in such cases exceeds the means of individual or collective humanity. If there were no other proof to make us believe in His existence, must there not be a God in order to pity? It is a thing to consider.

However, apart from this thought of suffering, and the effect it produces upon others, there is no wonder before our eyes like that goodness in itself. O, domestic hearth! O, circle of the family! O, children's bower of our first years, where we breathed the love of all things bright, and innocent, and holy, we may grow old, but we return to thee, as Lacordaire says, with a young heart; and it is only the hope of heaven which can console us for seeing the day becoming overcast and the serene hours gone. Yes; at all times and every where have we need, O benign girl, Mary Anne Letitia! of thy image; thou that hast left us last, thou who hadst the secret of dignity tempered by innocence, thou exquisite and inviolable model whose sole presence was a lesson, setting before us the type of man in his redeemed loveliness, true, pure, sincere, simple, and holy. But let us view the portrait. Tall, most beautiful, with large and singularly expressive eyes, of exquisite grace in all her movements, so as to be regarded in that respect as a model by the French, and every where to be remarked for a singular delicacy, lofty and yet humble, producing an unaffected elegance of manner which could not be surpassed; of an innocence that spoke to every one's heart, in her smile, in her voice, and in all she uttered; affectionate and playful like her mother, intensely loving, so as to have no rest through solicitude for others, she retained during twenty summers the qualities which had endeared the child to all who knew her. Latterly there was in her smile, as she passed you returning from mass, an eternity of love of which certain eyes could hardly sustain the expression; accordingly they dropped before it. Heroic and uncompromising when it was a question of speaking the plain truth to people, who would never perhaps have heard it from others face to face, she practised literally, as if anticipating her future choice, that precept of the rule of St. Benedict which says, "Veritatem ex corde et ore proferre." Firm as granite when duty was in question, dissolved in tenderness when love alone had claims on her;

living in a world of her own of sweet deep holy thoughts, endeared to all who had the faculty of appreciating the delicate and beautiful in its sweetest and most sublime expression; admired by all for something that seemed to each, according to individual predilection, most prominent,—by a brother for what he called her pluck, by a confessor for her innocence inviolated from the font, by a father for the qualities that he himself most wanted; and, no doubt, as regards this last relation, it was so with others, between whom and her there may have been what I would ask leave to call the attraction of opposition. They would be for bringing her down lower to earth, and, perhaps, neither in the house nor on the river could they ever find themselves in outward agreement with her; they would be, as it were, sitting on opposite benches, but all the while at the bottom, in heart, and soul, and conscience, ah! there was the secret,—all the while they would be preferring her censure to the consent of others, and her girlish reproof to their applause. Ah! dear comrades, golden lads and lasses, where is the party seeking to be serene upon the fugitive waters of this troubled life that does not need such a companion, if not in actual presence, though this is what is best, at least in memory, to receive its influence? Every where a mind like hers is a power,—yes, the most irresistible of powers; it can prepare a conviction, as a great master remarks, insinuate a counsel, utter a mistrust, captivate a will, come to the aid of a consummate ability, smooth away its contradictions, remove its obstacles, and win over opponents before even they declare their hostility. This reason, so delicate and so firm, enveloped with so many charms that make it amiable, can yield force to the most profound, can fortify their resolutions or give a more specious form to their persuasions. Over all, whether the lightest or the most pensive, those who have seen least or most of men and things, who are disposed at times, the former to run wild, the latter to faulter and to doubt, there is nothing so efficacious, so salutary, so powerful for good as this ascendency, under a female form, of a youthful and courageous will.

Her pleasures and enjoyments too were characteristic. It used to be her pride, for instance, to work with her own hands in embroidering for the ornaments of churches, and innumerable

works of this kind attested her unwearied industry. In the field, where seemed to be the only mere recreation that she cared much for, she was a dauntless and graceful rider. In music, which was for her more than an amusement, she proved herself a genius, but of the tenderest and highest order; through willingness to oblige others, ready to play any thing that was asked for, but suffering all the while intensely if the strain did not correspond with the elevation and instinctive purity of her heart. In the sciences, to the study of which she was led by a strong natural inclination, skilled and even impassioned,—but with what an angelic passion!—to read the wonders of the stars, as if really it were from being herself a thing enskied. "D'une constitution excessivement délicate," said her venerable preceptor, on hearing of her departure; "d'un caractère ferme et résolu, d'un esprit réfléchi, méditatif, et propre aux études sérieuses, elle avoit un gout prononcé pour l'astronomie. A peine âgée de vingt ans, elle avait fait, dans cette science, de rapides et surprenans progrés, qui faisaient espérer, pour un temps donné, des connaissances peu ordinaires*." Then, again, all who knew her had remarked her power, unconsciously possessed, of elevating souls, the moral influence which she exercised over others; her pensive sadness when confronted with evil in any form; her loyal and amiable sincerity in the daily intercourse of life; her intimate affinity with things innocent like herself. Worthy, indeed, of being noticed, was that peace which encompassed her, that child-like joy at the least happy incident; that genuine simplicity which filled worldly people with a feeling that they could not interpret to themselves; that rare and solid judgment of things; that keen discernment of characters; that horror for what is mean and base and selfish; that natural repugnance to what is vulgar; that gratitude for the smallest act of attention; and, in fine, that invincible courage, so marvellously visible, at her supremely happy death. "What! at home! too ill to go to vespers!" O God! I knew what those words implied. They seemed to strike through me. They instantaneously produced the first anticipation of the loss which two years later overthrew our hopes. Consumption, that seemed miraculously

* L'Abbé Boutiers.

arrested in its course, then for a year quiescent, suddenly declared itself with violence only a month before her departure. Is there for some natures peculiarly delicate and angelical a secret intuition of the heaven that awaits them? Be the effects of that affinity, which here below connects them with it, what they may, her calm and profoundly conscious state with regard to the future, became now more than ever a thing to wonder at. Resigned to the Divine will, with a mind, as she herself quietly said, made up either to stay or go, wishing to stay for the sake of others, hoping to the last to have her wish in that respect granted; loving this life for the sake of the service that she knew she rendered to some dear to her, though to her of late its joys, so spiritual for her, had been mixed with both physical and mental suffering, saying to one who loved her, "Don't be so anxious about me. It is the very way to lose me;" for she saw the action of Providence in every thing, and its justice too,—absorbed every morning for some space in God, though ever ready to welcome the chance visitor, she evinced to the last hour of her life the sweetest and noblest qualities, that bespeak natural delicacy, nobleness, and honour. There was no fanaticism in her mind. It was a human and solid one. Nevertheless, there were secrets not yet disclosed, with respect to her view of the world and its mutability; she had never liked it, or rather worldly people in it. Attached to her family, as the tenderest and most affectionate child, she would add no drop of bitterness to the cup of others, already, as it seemed to her, sufficiently replenished. On the contrary, she devoted herself to household cares, accepting duties from which she might well have excused herself; and fulfilling them without the pleasures that make them sweet to mothers; but it was clear all the while that she looked to a religious life as to an asylum of peace, safe from the intrusion of all that was not elevated and congenial to her heart. God did not wish that her desires in this respect should be frustrated. Some days before her departure, having extorted the confession from her physician that there was no hope, she entered the order of St. Benedict, and in virtue of a "Bref ad hoc" of the Sovereign Pontiff, she made, secretly between the hands of a superior of that order, her profession and her great vows. Singular history! But still, to the household

and to all who came to see her nothing was to be visible but her sweet humanity, her tender affections, her resignation, and her patience. So to her father leaving her room on one of the last days, she said, "Come back soon. Let me see you as long as I can." To her confessor she said, "I fear it is presumption in me, but somehow I am not afraid to die." In truth, that was clear to those around her. Sacramentally visited, encompassed with divine protection and consolation, privileged even in regard to ecclesiastic discipline, for being allowed to have benediction in the house, she heard, the last evening of her life, even the music that she so much loved to play herself, the "Adeste, fideles" and the "Adoremus in æternum," by Herman, —passing thus away with Heaven about her, elevated, transfigured by faith and its holy instruments, charmed even by art and its inspirations, of which she knew the source, she woke at four in the morning of the Holy Innocents, when calling on her brother to feel her poor hand, as she termed it. The moment seemed supreme. Again, and now for the last time, before rejoining Him, visited by her divine Saviour in holy communion, she expressed her wish to speak to each of those who were in the room. So then, with "a distant softness," she made, to use her expression, a few last requests. Among these requests, just before leaving, after soliciting expenses for the poor, "Don't speak much about me," she said to one whose garrulity she mistrusted; while "Don't forget me; I fear you will soon forget me," was what she uttered to another, to whom her whole life had been an inspiration. To the very last minute she was in possession of the fullest intellectual health. She continued kissing the cross and smiling at it. Then suddenly raising her large blue eyes to Heaven she passed away, the body falling back on the pillow, while you heard for a moment a faint rattle, like the spring of a watch that snaps and runs down. All was over, at six in the morning of the Holy Innocents, herself one of them, who might truly say, in the words of the office of that day, "Anima nostra sicut passer erepta est de laqueo venantium; laqueus contritus est, et nos liberati sumus." Yes; even under the mere impressions of nature, we say "delivered;" for she took away with her, so to speak, such a created observing intelligence of all things, combined with love for their Author, such

an intense and human perception of what is sublime, and beautiful, and sweet, that you can no more imagine that she, possessing and exercising such faculties, has perished, than that the stars and the flowers and the harmony have perished, which, without such a creature, would be deprived of part, at least, of the very object and reason of their creation.

However, all this is by the way—but "O philosophe," wrote the same endeared preceptor, "qui niez ce qu'il y a de plus certain au monde; qui vantez les deux ou trois sages que le paganisme a produits, voyez donc la vie et les derniers momens d'une vierge Chrétienne, dans une maison du monde, mais dans une maison où la foi vit toujours, et dites nous qui de vos sages païens, qui de vos amis incrédules, a vécu et est mort, en léguant au monde de pareilles vertus, tant de résignation, tant d'héroïque courage."

Thus have we been drawn on a second time, to speak of things little apparently in consonance with our professed object, when introducing this miniature to the notice of our little party. Well, the picture was not in fault, but we perhaps were to blame for recalling what it does not fully disclose. Returning then to what is immediately before us, let us observe the living original in the days of her health. Oh! it was then the gayest of the gay, the truly arch and mirthful; but still, even all this in a sweet noble meditative way. See her then as in France,—the earliest of risers, out laughing before the dawn, and hurrying forth with her little sister before any one else in the house was awake, and for that reason the despair of aged priests, who did not like to be forestalled at the divine altar; then returning full of praises at the beauty of the sky and the sweetness of the morning air, as if the sole object of such eccentric proceedings had been to admire and enjoy them; or behold her even during the last summer of her life, when, weak and suffering, she could only sit among the flower beds of her sloping garden, so beautiful, so serene, thanking God for that exquisite pleasure, granted thus, as it were, in the way of a respite, reading some favourite book, or working at her knitting, or chatting with some playful girls, who seemed spell-bound by her presence, herself, with all her deep holy thoughts, still as merry as the best of them, chaining to her feet by the magic of a smile, or of words as

innocent, those who would otherwise have been far ty, rang- and inno- ing over hills and valleys. O thou creature of gra o not ask cence, that makest pain and weakness lovable! I h a part- now where is the youthful company that needs not suc ; but ner, such a guardian, such a crowning of a happy da earn where is the man, bowed down by years, who has not to f n- from his daughter when resembling thee? O tenderness of t ways of God! Our mothers taught us His name when we w e children; the wife engraved it on the soul of the youth an, beloved daughter, when left to him, repeats it to the aged his and communicates a last youthful and virginal revelation (ian bed of death. Such are the transfigurations of the Chr n- woman.

Well, no doubt every where there are young persons thus co stituted, thus endowed, thus deputed, possessed with gentl sovereign grace, of an enchanting presence and discourse, simple yet profound, humanized yet supernatural, gay and yet serious, with passions made of nothing but the finest part of pure love, —"beautiful and fresh-minded as the sunbeam just touching the earth for the first time;" all reverence and all duty, all firmness up to heroism, and all indulgence down to kissing the dust, all desire and all serenity, all weakness with innocence, and all strength with honour; for, ever noble and high-spirited amidst the greatest physical debility, men stand often, in regard at least to moral elevation, like cowards before them. And the whole truth is that in this feminine dignity, allied with every human grace that charms, there is an element that cannot be separated even in thought from the sanctity of God. Like her also, whose picture is before us, children perhaps of mothers from whose lips no word of evil ever fell, of mothers incapable even of having a single hostile or bitter thought of others, possessing a nature calm, and yet susceptible and affectionate, maternal without egotism, pious without fanaticism, tolerant, not through indifference, but through tenderness and modesty; children of mothers who were women of faith, and ever inspired by it with holy charity, they themselves leave us, to say again the plain truth in a homely way, without words to express their character, without intelligence to comprehend it, without a heart fit to love it; for it is greater than our language, than our under-

standing, than our heart. It is sufficient of itself alone to convince us that there is something in the world above the material universe, above the talents, and the science, and the genius that can scan it,—beyond the reach of time and death, that threaten every thing else with an end. In their presence we have a certain instinctive sense that some thing of heaven is here in a human form near us, and that's all. Well, such beings, in years of health, full of sweet endearing cheerfulness, will often consent to join your party on the river and in the fields. What would you think of him who would not be gladdened by their company? Alas! a day may come, as you have just learned it has already arrived for the poor painter who has just made the above rude, hasty sketch from life,—when, love and dote on it as you may, that company cannot be had! when of her, as an old sepulchral eulogy expresses it, "quam omnes sodales suæ quærunt," you may say "non erepta vita sed donata," when she whose sick chamber, amidst the sorrows of pain, seems pleasanter and more cheerful than the most smiling bank without her, that hears only the laughter of the gay and strong, will have broken the fowler's snare and escaped far beyond your sight to the pure ether of her native clime, when the warmest affection will be constrained to echo the sentiment of exalted faith and say,

> "Turpia jam pietas, animam lugere beatam;
> Gaudentemque Deo flere, nocens amor est."

But no more of this. We must not longer obtrude such private reminiscences. Let us return to the brightest hours, when no tears fall. Well, then, of a truth, in general the theme is so agreeable that I must even now proceed to show off a little of my learning in connexion with it. I would have you to know, then, that Alexander de Pont-Aymery, Seigneur de Fochesou, in the year 1596, published his "Paradoxe Apologique, où il est fidèlement démontré que la femme est beaucoup plus parfaite que l'homme en toute action de vertu;" and that no less grave a personage than Dom Caffiaux, the Benedictine, in his historical, philosophical, and critical defence of the fair sex, defends most triumphantly poor injured women from the charges brought against them of loving finery, of being inclined to chatting over much, of succumbing to vanity, and so forth; and even demon-

strates, in opposition to what some literary ladies have written, that we are altogether in error as to what we so impertinently call their imperfections.

Upon the whole, then, if in an unguarded moment you were disposed to admit for our unpretentious association the fantastic rule which was accepted by the king's merry court in Love's Labour's Lost, I would address you in the lively words of Biron,

> "Then fools you were these women to forswear;
> Or, keeping what is sworn, you will prove fools.
> Let us once lose our oaths, to find ourselves,
> Or else we lose ourselves to keep our oaths.
> It is religion to be thus forsworn;
> For charity itself fulfils the law:
> And who can sever love from charity?"

We have touched on the tragic, on the merry side of this subject, and on the sublime one too. Now is presented the prosaic. A great author of our time makes the remark, that a party of Englishmen cannot sit after dinner without talking of those who are excluded during the interval of sipping wine. Pretty work they'll make of it if any one should then speak of the miniatures lately shown with so much reverence. An old poet represents a woman saying to such an intelligent party,

> "Good faith, sirs, all the ladies in the court do plainly report,
> That without mention of them you can make no sport;
> They are your playn song, to sing descant upon,
> If they were not, your mirth were gone."

We don't want to see that observation verified; much talking does not in every case prove the existence of much regard, or consideration either. But we do want a certain ordinary capacity for appreciating the goodness, yes, and for profiting intellectually by the charms, too, of those whom it is hard to name here, placed as we are by our English tongue in the dilemma of having to choose some term that is either too familiar or too formal and precise. We are not required, indeed, to elect one of these for our captain, coxswain, or, as French boys say, prefect of our promenade. Proud as May and humorous as April, she might have her longings every ten minutes, though

it were to stop our proceedings before we were past the first reach; for, to say the truth, your mad wenches are generally wedded, that is, as Boyet explains it, "to their will." We are not, of course, going formally, absolutely, and still less, you may be sure, avowedly to be ruled by some stylish young party in pink or any other colour, after the manner of one of the old German tribes, which drew forth the prodigiously wise and liberal remark of Tacitus, so worthy of an enlightened politician of a certain school, "in tantum non modo a libertate sed etiam a servitute degenerant." Neither do we wish to see any of our serene brotherhood in the position of the Knight of the Damsels, who alone by himself had to escort some nine or ten of them; and a very troublesome affair, as you may well suppose, it proved for him. We are not going to take with us "that beauty which made King Agrican come from the Caspian gates, with half Scythia, to find his death from the hands of Orlando; that beauty which made King Sacripant forget both his country and his honour; that beauty which had tarnished the renown of the great Orlando himself, and turned the whole East upside down." We take with us no Barbara Allen, with her airs or her repentance,—no insatiable lover of costly presents, who, if she were to gaze at a star as we return home after sunset, might elicit the remonstrance, You need not look so long at it, for I cannot give it to you. But for all that we hold that it will be very advisable, in a quiet way, on many occasions, to call upon some feminine Christian name, and to heed what something ending in 'y' says to us, though it be "as witty a piece of Eve's flesh as any in Illyria," or one that might be thought to belong to that class of damsels at Madrid of whom the lady who travelled into Spain in the seventeenth century tells us, that they say things so very pleasant that they would make one die with laughing, and that, being informed of all things that happen in the town, if they have a merry jest to break even upon their majesties, they had rather be half hanged than lose it; and, indeed, for that matter, one has not to go to the amphitheatre of Madrid to find such characters, for in all places, as Theocritus himself shrewdly observes, "women know every thing." At least, as her mother said of Olivia, "the girls have a great deal to say upon every subject;" and here on the water, I assure

you, the lady, as Hamlet says, will say her mind freely, and, should there be occasion, will screw you out a secret from a statist. It won't be amiss to be swayed after the firmest resolutions by "there's a dear," and to steer or "stop her," or walk in the direction they counsel; and, in short, it will be the part of our serene brotherhood to follow their advice generally, after the manner of our German ancestors, who used to think, as the same Tacitus mentions, that there was something holy and provident in women: "nec aut consilia earum adspernantur aut responsa negligunt." I do not mean, indeed, by these observations, that we are to be initiated at once into all the mysteries of the woman's home, or occasional conversation when she leaves it, coming forth, after French intelligence, varied like nature, or oftener than she, and better by the help of art, her emulous servant, when, too, she sings over her purchases, cambrics, lawns, as they were gods or goddesses, when you would think a gown were a she-angel, she so chants to the sleeve-band and the work about the square on't;

> "For should I now to you relate
> The strength and riches of their state,
> The powder, patches, and the pins,
> The ribands, jewels, and the rings,
> The lace, the paint, and warlike things,
> That make up all their magazines,
> * * * * *
> I more voluminous should grow
> Than Hollingshed or ancient Stowe."

To be sure, though our young ladies do not require, like the Sybarites, a year's previous invitation in order to get themselves ready for appearing properly, we are sometimes in a direct and rather uncomfortable way confronted with these things, even when it is only a question of going among the green rushes. We find an allusion to this liability in one of our old plays, where the following words occur:—

> "Sir, ye seem wel seen in women's causes;
> I pray you tel me what causeth this,
> That women after their uprising
> Be so long in their appareling?"

The reply is ready enough.

> "Forsooth, women have many lets,
> And they be masked in many nets,
> As frontlets, fillets, partlets, and bracelets,
> And then their bonets and their poynets.
> By these lets and nets, the let is such
> That speed is small when haste is much.
> Another cause why they come not forward,
> Which maketh them dayly to draw backward,
> And it is a thing they cannot forbear,
> The trimming and pinning up of their gere,
> Specially their fidling with the tail pin,
> And when they would have it prickt in,
> If it chance to double in the cloth
> Then they be vexed, and swere an othe;
> Til it stand right they will not forsake it,
> Thus though it may not, yet wil they brake it.
> But be ye sure they do but deface it;
> When they would make it, oft times they mar it."

All this, it must be admitted, is profoundly true; so that, as another says, "a ship is sooner rigg'd by far than a gentle lass made ready," a consideration which at times may give us pause ere we decide on having company to which such delays are incident; but nevertheless, for all that, whether we will or not, one day or another there are some who must perforce make acquaintance with some parts at least of the subject; for, as Heywood's Pedlar says of his box which contains those stores of what maids lack from head to heel,

> "Who liveth in love and love would win
> Even at this pack he must begin.
> Needles, thread, thimbles, and such other knacks,
> Where lovers be no such thing lacks."

Perhaps it would be no great crime to remark that St. Francis de Sales, addressing Christians of the old fashion, does not in the least scruple actually in one of his sermons * to draw a comparison from what takes place on such occasions, observing, as a

* Twelfth after Pent.

matter of course, that no one thinks of how much it may cost when making a present of this kind provided he can only elicit an expression of satisfaction when it is shown. However, in such times as ours, I am free to confess, over and over again, that these may be occasionally unpleasant necessities to think upon. What care we for comparisons with the Duchess of Milan's gown that some praise so, while others tell our fair party that it's but a night-gown in respect of theirs,—cloth of gold and cuts, and laced with silver, set with pearls down sleeves, side-sleeves and skirts round, underborne with a bluish tinsel; but for a fine, quaint, graceful, and excellent fashion theirs is worth ten on't. What care we for such descriptions,—we who, if the truth be known, hear only of hair-bracelets, rings, gawds, conceits, knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats? But whether poor or costly matters be the theme at times, let me tell you there are many other lessons to be supplied by

"The gentle bevy that adorns the world *."

And, indeed, as Calderon de la Barca, in his "Love the Greatest Enchantment," says expressly,

"Tis ascertained that women,
When to letters or to arms
They with resolute will apply them,
Oftentimes surpass the men †."

Sometimes, indeed, we want to hear or observe nothing very great or wise, or sublime. There are moments when it is enough for the child, and surely we are all children sometimes, to have some one who can amuse him with that vegetable which is mentioned by Eupolis in his Golden Age, teaching him how to split pea-pods, a very curious art, though he need not mind his merry teacher when he hears some traditional rules of these peascod-shellers about what is to be done when he finds nine in one of them. How pleasant is it to hear one of these innocent and natural critics, showing up, in the way that we have so lately had occasion to observe, the comic and amiable side in all our different characters, so as to bring out what is charming in its

* Ariosto. † D. F. Mac-carthy's Translation.

simplicity and even ignorance with as much indulgence and desire to inspire love for each, though all the while with as much airy sprightliness as we might fancy a winged angel evincing while so employed in slily watching us all. But the fact is, in general there's so much depth and sweetness in all this chat and nonsense of theirs, and such a troop of graces waiting on every one of their words and actions, that their presence alone is all that we for the moment ask for. Truly, they do our pleasures much grace, and set a fair fashion on our entertainment, which without them were not half so beautiful and kind; they add worth to it and lively lustre, and we must thank them. Nor should any of us feel himself less a Christian for adding with Pope, in allusion to each of them,

> "If to her share some female errors fall,
> Look on her face, and you'll forget them all."

Perhaps, between ourselves, too far from shore to be overheard, and with no Francisco de Moraes on board to contradict us by disparaging the sex, as we grieve for the honour of chivalry to say he indulges himself systematically and most impertinently all through the otherwise admirable romance of the Palmerin of England,—perhaps, I say, in select committee seated thus, we should read rather "adore them all;" for, in fact, who amongst us does not prefer Angelica to all the faultless heroines of romance? Angelica is every where. It is she who is so well beloved in our town that not the worst dog in the street would hurt her little finger. "Youth," as another poet says, "will attribute virtues to her, whether she has them or not; middle age be unable to help gazing on her; old age dote on her. She is womankind itself, in form and substance; and that is a stronger thing, for the most part, than all our figments about it *."

> "If she strikes the vocal strings,
> If she's silent, speaks, or sings,
> If she sit, or if she move,
> Still we love, and still approve."

What party, except for a boat-race or some other kind of rough

* L. Hunt.

match, is complete and serene to the end being lass-lorn? "He seems somewhat dissatisfied," says a young woman of her betrothed lover, writing to her sister; "so I suppose I must go up to town to set him to rights." Doubtless he was in the condition of Valentine in the Two Gentlemen of Verona, and had written to tell her of it, saying, like him,

> "Repair me with thy presence, Silvia."

Womanhood, as God made it, should be drawn like what the philosophers call an universal nature.

> "——— We want it every where,
> Shining with beauty, light, and heavenly virtue's grace."

We want it, O ye members of high clubs and potent senators, even to form that public opinion, that general way of regarding things, of which a great French writer (Mme. de Stael) has said, rather hastily I must think, "that men are the masters." A pretty opinion it would prove, truly, if women were not to help in forming it. We want it to temper our stiff natures; "for those creatures who," as an old author remarks, "are made of man, and not of earth, have a more delicate humanity than we have." And then,

> "The pleasant language of their eyes and gestures
> Doth speak their hearts at peace."

Some, if they could only solve a mathematical problem, or give a metaphysical explanation of time, would not care for all this, though it were

> "——— Sweet as the rose's spirit
> Or violet's cheek, on which the morning leaves
> A tear at parting."

Such characters, exact and domineering, as often crotchety, speculative, and ridiculous about whims of their own, prove often dangerous company, a burden to themselves and others. No doubt they can be positive and unanswerable in a certain way, but all the world can't be precisely of their way of thinking. How can it be expected that we should make light of lovely

faces? What do such censors come hither for? Let them depart elsewhere on their travels, if they are like Horatio in the old play, so smitten with the ugly and the froward that if Africa had more choice of monsters for them, they would prefer some scolopendra-cousin, the serpent with a hundred legs.

But what is the use, perhaps others will ask, of having dragged in such companions on an expedition? I would reply, Are you so sure that they are dragged in? A woman's thought runs before her actions, as, in fact, so do all thoughts. But even on the hypothesis of their having to be pressed as by a gang commissioned for the purpose, is it nothing to have a tone given to conversation so as to render it in harmony with all the qualities that have been already spoken of, and that we shall have to speak of in the sequel, as indispensable? Yes, just so; for to tell you the female truth, which, as Ben Jonson very gallantly and correctly says, "is the simple truth," and ladies and lordlings, pray you mark well that synonym in regard to still higher matters that are to be mentioned later, though it pleased the Duke of Illyria to say in general that women "lack retention," we shall find in their society the same assistance. Why, there is not one of their looks that is not a thought. Hence, in a work attributed to the celebrated Bishop Fléchier, and in a chapter treating "du commerce avec les femmes," we find the author insisting on the advantages to be drawn from their company. He would only except those who are gamblers; but as for the rest, so far from its being well to avoid them, he is of opinion that what one may learn from them is of great extent and utility. Montesquieu lays down the rule rather too absolutely when he says, "that a nation in which women lead the tone is a talkative nation." Let him reserve his judgments about nations for others; it is not so in a boat at least. It is their tone which keeps men to their duty; it serves the mind as well as the body. The ideal of woman, in religion, for instance, which must get into the boat along with us if we mean to be happy at all, as we shall show on a future excursion, is that of a loving, reverential, compassionate, invincible creature, who does not judge the world or condemn the world, but who sweetens the world, pacifies the world, purifies the world, and prays for the world, as if verifying the words of Hamlet,

"Why, let the strucken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play;
For some must watch, while some must sleep,
Thus runs the world away."

Even the most pious of these devout companions, like that wondrous creature of whom we have so lately seen the portrait, whose minds

"Appear more like a ceremonious chapel
Full of sweet music, than a thronging presence,"

are also very amiable, mirthful, and charming companions, gentle and gracious. Bernardine de St. Pierre, whose evidence ought to be conclusive on such a point, says also that they show themselves more patient to listen to you than men, which is a consideration no doubt that will move some of the latter more than any thing else. At all events, as M. de Sacy remarks, "Their heart is not dried up by the pride of devotion, the worst of all pride." Each of them, in a word, as she sits near the helm, the guardian of our boat's company, is just one degree less than angel. She is often the best philosopher, too, of the whole lot. "My dear boy, you must put up with it like the rest of us," I heard a woman once say in a crowd; and I think that was an instance of very sound advice for a common occasion. I'll but bring my young man here to school, and he will find those who will teach him more wit than ever he learned before in his life, and he will pay nothing for it either, but be paid for his learning. Women are no pedants; and besides, let me tell you, we may often with all our boasted manhood, stand in need on one of our expeditions of hearing their brave, aye, and short words when it is a question of temporizing with circumstance, or of surrendering some vital principle. We men may say more, swear more. But, indeed, as Viola says, "our shows are more than will." "Men," as some one else says truly, "are more disposed than women to act and to think as if they had been created only for and by themselves." That is a positive truth. It was an excellent idea of some French authors to compose a book entitled, "Les Hommes jugés par les Femmes*,"

* Larcher et P. J. Jullier.

only one would infinitely prefer hearing the judgment formed of them by our common English women, our Charlottes and Alices, let their class be ever so obscure, than that which is delivered with such pedantry by the foreign literary, courtly, and worldly ladies whose words are cited in that particular work. The estimate formed of us by such companions as we would prefer taking with us, would be found fresher, truer, more faithful in resemblance to what exists in England at least, even generally more profound, without the pretentious utterance; and this is what would serve us well. For, to give an instance, "If you want to know the real value of a man," says one of these judges, "inquire as to his conduct with relation to those whom he loved. The man who has acted ill in that regard, and abused the confidence of a woman, would be, if a king, a tyrant; if a warrior, a traitor; if a politician, a vile wretch, ready to sell himself for money." But let them view us on what side they will, it is of infinite moment to hear every hour of the day what they think of us, judging as they do from that prodigious power of observation which belongs to their nature. "A man," says another of them, "can live more easily in society, with the contempt of women attached to him, than with that of men; but before God —(you would never guess who says it)—but before God, before the tribunal of that Justice which sees all, and which knows all, the contempt of women would be much more to his prejudice." Truly, that is to be believed; for, now to hint at very grave matters, you observe how we talk together and rattle away on occasions of this kind, let what subject will be uppermost. Well, it may sometimes happen that we shall hear from those with rather rough chins,

> "Manners with fortunes, humours turn with climes,
> Tenets with books, and principles with times."

Propositions, in other words, may be started, and rejoinders made, which would need the interruption of some soft but indignant Eubella, exclaiming,

> "——— Shall fear or flattery
> Corrupt a generous soul? I am a woman,
> The weakest of a thousand, yet I dare
> Give men example rather to be sacrificed

Than betray virtue's cause; we give our life,
To grow again, from our own funeral pile,
Like the Arabian bird."

What think you of that? "I shall not soon forget," writes a late poet, "the affecting compliment that Lord Rossmore paid our party in calling the evening a strengthener." Could we find for such expostulation from these fair lips, the armourers of our hearts, a nobler or truer epithet?

In fine, banish those by whom we men are men, exclude them utterly, as if forsooth you never more wanted any thing in their line, from such intervals, and if you like to hear philosophy for once, though in such company it has not much to recommend it, for all its great airs, "There will be wanting the sentiment of one rational being towards another, made tender by a specific difference in that which is essentially the same in both; there will be wanting a union of opposites, a giving and receiving mutually of the permanent in either, a completion of each in the other." Upon the whole, notwithstanding the momentary suggestion of an illustrious author, for once nodding like Homer, we must insist upon having permission to take with us, on most of our expeditions at least, something more soothing, and cheering, and inspiring, than a cigar. Woman in this scale; what in that? No matter, any thing you like, at least just now; all else will kick the beam.

But to return to what is general, and less likely to offend any one, though I am sure, as the old poet says, "All the gentlewomen here have forgiven me; if the gentlemen will not, then the gentlemen do not agree with the gentlewomen, which was never seen before in such an assembly."

Sociability, then, without any exclusions, is an indispensable qualification, and, consequently, we must also be on our guard against admitting persons who undermine the whole edifice of practical benevolence by making it consist in saying that you love the whole universe, or mankind, or our country, while you are neglecting and disliking your neighbour, as it were, in the same boat with you; whereas, to use the words of Butler, "these objects being too vast for such creatures as we are, and there being wanting a less general and nearer subject of good will,

our Saviour not giving us a theory and speculation, but a plain rule of life, has with the utmost possible propriety put the principle of virtue upon the love of our neighbour, which is that part of the universe, that part of mankind, that part of our country which comes under our immediate notice, acquaintance, and influence, and with which we have to do." No less are we to consider as ineligible those who seek to undermine this virtue of which the principle is thus placed, by practising duplicity and dissimulation, whose manners are all artificial in regard to benevolence, as when the exclamation was extorted,

> "That there should be small love 'mongst these sweet knaves,
> And all this courtesy!"

A writer in an English review, which has the reputation, justly acquired, of being conducted with great talent and cleverness, has recently expressed his conviction, with singular candour, that friendship is a thing about which no one now-a-days ever dreams, unless it be some idle, silly young man from the country; that in London friendship is and ought to be regarded as an anachronism, that its claims would be an immense bore, its notions a mistake." No doubt this able critic gave himself credit for remarkable sagacity on finishing his article. But he does not look very wise on the river. Ain't he a cure? We must demur as to having any thing to do with the kind of men who read such lucubrations with approval, or who suppose that they give a true idea of the society around us. The sinister chuckle heard at times within chambers at the Temple or Lincoln's Inn, or even in a University, is not exactly an echo of the heart of our metropolis. No less caution is necessary lest we should have amongst us persons of bad humour, or who are apt to be put out by trifling accidents. "It is a disagreeable person," says Balzac, "whose ill-humour spoils the serenity of a fine day, and disturbs the joy of the most holy festival. Passing bad nights, he finds fault with all the world in the morning, and declaims against universal nature. It must be confessed that a person of this kind can only be loved Christianly, that is, just so far as one is bound by the authority of religion." Our school on the river, or in Hampstead fields, enforces the lesson,

"—— ut ameris, amabilis esto."

And the fact is, if you only try with the least good will to please, you must please. Pliny says that servants, in order to please their master, pay more attentions to his guest than to himself. So here every one has regard to what may be required for the comfort of his companions, who are, in a certain sense, his guests for the day. It is curious to find a mediæval monk describing and admiring these very qualifications. "You say," he says to one of his correspondents, "that you liked the hours we spent at the Villa Apponi, where you conversed with our brethren. Sweet was their society, sweet their conversation, sweet their company. I wonder not; for in truth they are amiable in society, and useful for imitation,—amiable for suavity of manners as well as for sanctity *."

Still more curious, perhaps, is it to observe the great stress laid upon such manners in the eleventh century by such a rapt contemplatist as Richard of St. Victor. "For the soul to be externally beautiful," saith he, "it must be well composed, both in manners and conversation; it must show itself sociable and amiable to all men (sociabilem et amabilem ad omnes), injuring no one, circumventing no one, compassionating and assisting all who need pity and assistance. It must show itself in cheerfulness of countenance, gentleness of eyes, and in conversing with all persons not alone without offence, but also with grace (cum conversatur cum omnibus, non solum sine querela, sed etiam cum gratia) †." It must be confessed that from those former times which are called so barbarous, "we can learn," as M. de Sacy says, what he thinks we greatly want now—"social lessons of delicacy and urbanity." Alas! we want too often something that is better. Do you ask me to name it? "There was a poor simpleton," says a celebrated French woman, whose affecting narrative will yield the answer, "there was a poor distracted creature, Monsieur Demai, who was accustomed to pass from house to house where we lived, and even to enter the rooms without invitation; and when people wishing to get rid of him would ask, saying, 'Well, Monsieur Demai, do you want

* Odonis Epist. † In Cant. Cantic. xiv.

any thing?' 'Nothing new,' he used to reply; 'I am looking for tenderness.' 'What! have you not found it yet, after searching so long?' 'No; and yet I am still searching for it every where.' 'Have you looked in the garden?' 'No;' and then as if a fresh thought seized him, he would be off to the parterre. The servants used sometimes to grow weary of him, and say, 'You won't find it here: go to the next village, you will find it there.' Then he used to sigh, as if he understood that they were jeering him, and depart mournfully." Who does not, nevertheless, feel like him at times? Conversation in some circles certainly does not seem to have improved much since the times of the Tatler, when a writer could describe it as being so managed as if the perfection of society were in knowing how to offend on the one part, and how to bear an offence on the other. Equality he considered nevertheless as the rule, so that whoever is most obliging must be most diverting. "As it is," he adds, "wherever I go I am entertained with some absurdity, mistake, weakness, or ill luck of some man or other, whom not only I but the narrator has a value for." No anecdote, however, on such occasions should be, he thinks, a taking one, but what was to the advantage of the person of whom it is related. And we may add that no less necessary is the rule of Madame Swetchine, with whom the absent had always right on their side*.

But it is not alone a man of idyls and eclogues, loving and loveable in regard to one person, or, in a general way, a friendly and sociable fellow in a company small or large, that is required for the purpose we have in view. There ought to be a certain turn of mind of which the character is sound, universal, manly benevolence. Yes, just so, manly; there is nothing else more deserving of the epithet.

Nevertheless, every one is not moulded after this fashion. The spirits of some are as coy as haggards of the rock. Like a hurt fowl they creep into sedges. They ask with amazement,

"Vis tu homines urbemque feris præponere sylvis?"

Others, with hearts frozen up, are harsher still; like Timon

* Lett. i. 14.

himself, exclaiming, "Therefore he abhorr'd all feasts, societies, and throngs of men!" Or, as Alceste says,

> "Trop de perversité règne au siècle où nous sommes,
> Et je veux me tirer du commerce des hommes."

Some, in fact, through their love of uncharitable seclusion, resemble more wild animals than men; and Richard of St. Victor does not hesitate to point out the resemblance. "Lo!" he says, "here is another beast, like a bear, to devour much flesh. This is a hideous animal, as we all know, which loves to dwell in remote and hidden places. This represents envy; for as if ashamed of its own ugliness, it studies to conceal itself. Your bear is a malicious and cruel animal; and such is envy. Envy hates the felicity of another; and what can be more malicious? Envy shuns the light, and hates to be seen; it rages in secret. Your bear is also an unquiet animal, so that when tied to a post it never ceases either to walk round and round, or, with its feet fixed, to throw its head to this side and to that; and in this envy resembles it, which never suffers the mind to rest for an instant*."

In order to speak of benevolence, therefore, we are obliged to retrace our steps a little, and take another view of the need of being sociable as a preliminary to the acquisition of that higher temper. There is then no doubt a disposition amorous of ferine solitude to which men are liable; and indeed so true is this, that a celebrated author very ingeniously suggests that Providence, in the most mysterious parts of creation, has made provision against it; "for what," he asks, "was the object in view in creating beasts of prey—lions, and tigers, and boa-constrictors in the east; panthers and catamounts in the south; bears and wolves in the north; crocodiles and rattle-snakes in the west? My own opinion is," he continues, "they were designed to enforce civilization. Without these terrors attending a sojourn in the wilderness, man would have wandered off as they do, and lived alone; he would have made no home, dwelt with no wife, and nurtured no children. His very language would have perished. The option was not given him. He was so placed

* De Eruditione Hominis interioris, lib. iii. c. 8.

that he could not in general live alone. To preserve life he had to associate with his kind, to unite with tribes, to form nations, to build cities, and to live in community." Be that, however, as it may, and not to suggest that in the absence of lions and tigers, the rheumatism here in England may be designed to play the same part if we felt inclined to make our home in the bulrushes with your kingfisher,—the intention of Providence is manifested, as we said, by every thing around us; and judging from the character of those who seek to contravene it, we did well to pronounce such persons to be ineligible. Not to remark that a life spent out of the world, as Gray observes, has its hours of despondence, its inconveniences, its sufferings, as numerous and real, though not quite of the same sort, as a life spent in the midst of it,—their tastes and those of persons who like to enjoy serene hours would hardly agree; in fact, they are not human. Who can traverse the vast solitudes of the Landes,—to say nothing of the sedgy regions about Penton-hook, where you seem twelve miles from a lemon, as Sydney Smith used to say of Foston-le-Clay in Yorkshire,—and not feel that impression of sadness which man experiences even when he only imagines himself to be isolated from his fellow-creatures, and left alone with land or water and sky? Talk of poetry, indeed! "Never write a page," says Norreys to Leonard, "till you have walked from your room to Temple Bar, and mingling with men, and reading the human face, learn why great poets have mostly passed their lives in cities." It has been remarked that some even of the idyls of Theocritus treat of town, not country life. An instance is that description of the Syracusan women in the streets of Alexandria, going to the palace to see the show. Praxinoë, who is one of them, exclaims, "What a throng!" adding, "Give me your hand, Gorgo. And do you, Eunoë, take the hand of Eutychis. Keep close to her, that you may not be lost. Let us all squeeze in together. Hold tight to us, Eunoë. Oh, wretched me! Gorgo, my veil's torn right in two! If you would be in any degree blest, good sir," addressing one in the crowd, "keep off my robe." "It is not my fault," the poor fellow replies; "but I'll do my best." "Courage, madam!" cries another stranger, rather officious; "we are all safe." "Next year and afterwards, dear sir," she replies, pleased with

his attention for all that, "may you be prosperous, for taking care of us. What a good, compassionate man! But, alack! sir, our Eunoë is being hustled. Come, child, burst through! Well done! we are all inside, as the man said when he shut in his bride." How true is this to life! and, excepting for the torn veil, how pleasing! But our exclusive lovers of the country affect now to be more pastoral than Theocritus, and to possess a greater susceptibility to the rural than Horace, whose taste for its pleasures at least does not seem to have been much impaired by his knowledge of town life. Nay, what is worse, their professed love of rural seclusion is pushed to such an extreme, that they would not even live in the society of their own kinsfolk and acquaintances, so that they must find somewhat to criticize in the text of the Gospel, where we are told that blessed Mary and St. Joseph sought their child Jesus "inter cognatos et notos," thinking that He might have stopped amongst them, a supposition which of itself denotes to what social familiarity they were addicted; for, in fine, actually this state of things would be displeasing to what may be called this new race of mortals.

In fact, some persons living in the world avoid their fellow-creatures through certain strict, and, as others conceive, rather false notions of what is right in the highest order of duties; which notions of theirs are not to be confounded with the love divine that once, under extraordinary circumstances, thronged the Thebaide; whence St. Anthony sent that memorable reply to the Emperor Constantine, concluding with these words, expressive of its summary, "Love men, be just, and think of the poor;" but, as in this instance, the mark of distinction is easily detected. "I have never been able," says Balzac, making the proper distinction, "to relish that studied sadness which disguises, under the pretence of the love of God, the aversion which it feels for men."

In general, when people are insisting on such things, they only follow in the track of all the unspoiled humanity that has passed before they were thought of; as when Pliny, so far at least its representative, writing from Rome to Præsens, said, "It is time you should revisit our crowded streets, and exchange your villa for this our scene of hurry, were it only that your rural pleasures may not grow languid by uninterrupted posses-

sion." He felt just as we do, you perceive; though perhaps your recluses will cry out against him, taunting him with Bow bells, as one who by his own confession had for friends only those whose employments engaged them in Rome.

Let us, however, dismiss all such characters now, whatever principle may have formed them, and proceed to consider the art, as it were, of benevolence and its advantages. One does not see exactly why it is not a thing that can be taught like any other accomplishment. There certainly is a trick in it, just as there is in sketching from nature or composing a group of figures. In the first place one does not see why we should not profit by being told in our apprenticeship, to take a large generous view of things, so as to try to form a tolerably good opinion of each other as being all persons belonging to the human family, that its Creator has shown such inconceivable love for—which advice, I hope, is not deemed unreasonable or exacting too much from any one. I should not like to have as a sitter aft in our pleasure-boat one like Bias of Priene, though he was one of the seven sages, having nothing else to say for all his wisdom but that the majority are the worst; nor should I feel greatly exhilarated if we were told to take with us another Pygmalion, who thought forsooth that there was no goodness upon earth, who regarded, consequently, all men as equal, those who pass for good even seeming to him worse than the wicked, because he thought them hypocrites. Neither would I invite any one, however glibly he might cite French, who had in his pocket or hand the maxims of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, which in our last ramble we objected to on other grounds; nor even any great reader of Tacitus, who by dint of studying him, had begun, like the Empress Catherine II., as she says herself, to look at every thing on the dark side, and to attribute to people in general more profound and interested motives than they are guilty of. Still less would I gladly suffer to pass in among us any one like Swift, who in a hundred passages in his writings rages even against children—there being actually his "modest proposal" for eating them. The dean, we are told, enters the nursery with the tread of an ogre. He recommends instead of venison the bodies of young lads and maidens not exceeding fourteen or under twelve. "A frightful self-con-

sciousness it must have been," says Thackeray, "which looked on mankind so darkly through those keen eyes of Swift*." Indeed, he describes himself dying in the world in a rage like a poisoned rat in a hole. Well, let all such beings stay in their holes. It is not we who can gain much by their leaving them. As worldliness has been already declined without thanks, we need not allude again now to its disqualification on this score. Only you may intimate as much to it; and add, moreover, that it seems to us as offering no contrast for all its airs with the cold scepticism as to motives, which is the stamp of the Jacobin spirit. Therefore, as the old dramatist says,

> "Be you so just to tell the world, that takes
> Delight to snarl and catch at every error
> In all states ———,"

that if you are not to sit with the council of vanity, neither are you to take up a position with those who hold virulent speech, condemning others. It must be confessed that these thoughts of our excursionists will not suit every one. In general, as Rivarol says, "indulgence for those we know is more rare than pity for those we do not know." You are a dreamer, some will say, and if we were simple enough to follow you in all your delicacies you would have caused us to make a great progress on the road to the country of fancies; but we know the world, and we have not lived like you in a sphere of your own, which consists in knowing nothing about it. The fact being, as you hear in your own halls, "one man is as bad as anoder, and a great deal worse." So they go on to speak in King Darius's strain, "O doleful days! O direful wickedness! how can I hold my fist from crying thump, in sight of this right rascal wretchedness!" Well, for answer, I would only say, that in a serene hour we are content to hear the truth, but not to have one that is as slanderous as Satan—nor do we wish to hear the result of his observations, though, that they are true, he swears by the very fangs of malice. Neither a boat nor a garden suit the kind of man described by Cicero as a pettifogger, cautious and acute, a herald of actions, a singer of formulas, a snapper-up of syllables—who believes in

* English Humourists.

no virtue, suspects all in the world, and would want the officer of justice like Harpagon to arrest the whole town and its suburbs. Poor old Nicholas of Clairvaux, at least, would be of our opinion, for he says, "cum hominibus virulentos sermones afflantibus non commiscearis *."

The pupil, then, as schoolbooks say, must learn and practise the secret art of being able to look upon his fellow-creatures generally, and on the whole with loving eyes. And it will be all the better if we can find one like Agrippa, of whom Tacitus says, "rarissimâ moderatione maluit videri invenisse bonos quam fecisse." He ought to be one accustomed to secret thoughts every day and hour of such a kind, that if he were suddenly to be asked by some one whom he was bound to answer what he was thinking about, he might be able to reply immediately and truly, when absolutely compelled to speak, that, as Marcus Antoninus says, it was about matters that are not misconstrued when his interrogator concludes from them that he is benevolent, of a simple loving mind, as is the part of a social animal, ζώου κοινωνικοῦ †. For our learner to make any progress, we require, so unreasonable are we, that he should get into the habit of putting kind interpretations on every thing, so as to become a person that will verify the words of Richard of St. Victor, when he exclaimed, "Oh, great virtue of charity, which calls the things that are not as those that are ‡!" How is it possible for us, after those words, to suspect ourselves or to be accused by others of exaggeration? A great author has admirably seized this trait in his portrait of the Bishop Bienvenu. His sister, Baptistine, describing the interview between him and the liberated convict as they sat at table, says, "This man, then, whom every one rejected, appeared such as I have said. Well, my brother, during the whole time of supper, excepting that he pronounced the sacred name on his first entrance, never once uttered a word that savoured of admonition; and yet you would have thought it the proper occasion for a little sermon, in order that some passing impression might be made on the poor wretch's mind. Any one else would have thought so, having

* Nic. Clarævall. Epist. iii. † Lib. iii.

‡ Tract. De Gradibus Charitatis.

such a one in hand. It seemed precisely the moment for feeding his soul as well as his body, and for addressing to him a few seasonable reproaches, with a lesson or two of morality and good advice to act better in future. My brother, however, did not even ask him the name of his country or his history, for his history was one of faults, and my brother seemed to avoid whatever could remind him of them. He carried this to such a degree that when speaking of the mountaineers of Pontarlieu living near heaven, and being happy through their innocence, he stopped short, as if fearing he had let fall a word which could afflict the man. My brother, no doubt, thought that the poor fellow had his memory only too present before him, and that the best thing was to distract his attention from it, and to make him fancy, though but for a moment, that he was a man like another. Was not that understanding charity well? Was there not something truly evangelic in that delicacy which refrained from sermonizing, from moral discourse, and from all allusions to his wound? Be that as it may, my brother was just the same that night as on any other; and he supped in company with Valjean, the liberated convict, just out of prison, with the same countenance and air that he would have supped along with Monsieur Gédéon the provost, or with the parish priest himself*." Well, this is the way of treating people that is suited for serene hours. We want persons who can feel and know with Richard of St. Victor that under the name of malice is not to be understood every concupiscence, but only that which is without a bridle—that under the name of wickedness, he knew what he was saying, is not to be understood every kind of ignorance, but only malicious ignorance†. Here is one, let us suppose what is very probable, in fact, we have lately seen her portrait,—one who at moments betrays, or affects perhaps, portentous ignorance of vital truths. But what national atmosphere did she breathe? who were her parents? how was she brought up? what were her opportunities of learning the things that you know? Silly, wild, perhaps, in these moments, while showing her kind of ignorance; but is it malicious? is it wicked?

* Vict. Hugo, les Misérables, tom. i.

† Declarationes ad Bernardum.

Nay, all the aspirations of that poor heart are for what is good. Richard was right, therefore; and he knew what was humanity better than you, with all your useful knowledge and statistical reports. Now this is the superior acquirement that our companions must possess if we are to give them vouchers. We want men who can view human life after the manner of William of Paris, who, as Joinville relates, compared it to the two castles, one on the borders, always threatened, or engaged with enemies, the other like that of Montlhéry, safe in the centre of the kingdom, peaceable, but without experience and without glory. We don't want glory. Most sensible people, at least before having read Rivarole's famous treatise, loathe and execrate the word; but we don't wish to see the poor endangered, dismantled, undermined castle given up as lost for ever, or coolly consigned over to the enemy as if he was sure of having it at last for his own freehold. Why should not the pupil get into the habit of making what theologians call acts of faith, having for object the good qualities, or such as heaven accepts for such, of others who are personally unknown to him? We do not want him to regard according to Apollo's ordinance every one that has a dash of poetry in him, whatever be his state or condition, as an hidalgo; but why should he not imitate the charity of the Spaniards, which is itself poetry, since it believeth all things,—with whom all poor foundlings picked up in the streets are held to be old Christians? That slip of a boy at your elbow, in the crowd, singing out with the choir at high mass, "habemus ad Dominum," is unconsciously doing all this, and proclaiming in a very happy sensible way, for all its innocence, his faith in the piety of every man, woman, and child who is present with him.

But, in fact, any where, only look at those before you, look at them after the manner of the artist whose genius for the poetry of common life has lately contrived to make "the minute to six" at the post-office, worthy of lasting till there will be no more minutes, and it will be an unfortunate occasion if you do not find much to admire. We do not hold, like Mercier, that you can arrive at the knowledge of a man's character by merely examining his feet; an investigation, besides, except in midsummer weather, on the Thames, which would not be always very easy, though by examining the way that shoes are worn

down you might divine whether your friend had pulled the wherry fairly up to Windsor, or only by means of a line from the slanting, gravelly towing-path, dragged her in plebeian fashion against the stream like a barge; but to omit mention of feet, and even of hands, which last are always bare on the river, and every where significative, faces are not covered; and the countenance you know, as Cicero says, "is the image of the whole mind; the eyes are disclosers." This youth, then, at least, as some terrified damsel in Shakspeare says, and culling out only one vice in her imagination, "bears in his visage no great presage of cruelty." But what other vice can you read in it? You may be in bad humour yourself, and if so you can find plenty; but otherwise I think it will puzzle you to make out a long inventory. The French Convention, by the way, would have been rather perplexed to know what to do with such a population as ours, when not subjected to some special training of a perverse kind which changes people's appearance; for, you know, it was not merely talents that they pursued, science that they feared, art that they banished, cultivation of mind that they thought dangerous; as that great magistrate, Portales, describing their conduct records, even "un tour heureux de physionomie," a pleasing expression of countenance, good looks, and a graceful figure with gentle manners, the amiable qualities which seemed only the gifts of nature, were so many infallible reasons for proscription. I repeat it, those ardent champions for "the rights of man," who so despised and hated mankind, would have had enough to do here, on the Thames, in the way of proscriptions, condemnations, and executions; and it would be amusing enough now, by way of pastime, as we pass each other, to mark how many under such a government would have been regularly in for it. An amiable, and gentle, and good-humoured thought with regard to others ends by leaving its mark in the face, giving it a certain stamp which attracts hearts. It is strange that Lacordaire should have spoken disparagingly of the street-population of London after saying, "I have never esteemed any type of beauty which does not bespeak goodness; all that does not bear that stamp leaves me cold, even the heads which denote genius; but the first man that comes up with an impression of goodness in his countenance moves and wins me

at once*." If we can't read goodness in many faces that are met with in our streets, I am sure I know not where he will have to go to find it; for, formed less by the suspicious temperament which heresy and schism generate, than by natural instincts and traditional principles of respect, they resemble the purely Catholic population of Ireland and of the continent by each wearing that general aspect of childlike tenderness and simplicity impressed on the countenances represented by the great mediæval artists, which Frederick Schlegel says he has always considered as the original characteristic of the human race. Then, again, view men collectively, and you will witness what a great author points out as the true proof of the inherent nobleness of our common nature; namely, the sympathy it betrays with what is fine and generous wherever crowds are collected. There are great men, too, amongst us, though the high qualities of many do not appear. "These presents of heaven," says the Père Boutauld, alluding to them, "these precious plants are born and left in forests, amidst oaks and briars, and perhaps they only bear wild fruit; but this is not their fault. Many of our great and good are where the great pontiffs and emperors of old might have been found before they were raised to the throne. They are in our shops or in our villages, apprentices to tradesmen, or little shepherd-boys tending sheep, though we do not distinguish them any more than they know themselves what they are†." This is not viewing things exactly like Bourdaloue, who, in his masterly anatomical discourses, seems anxious to leave no one any hope respecting either himself or the future fate of the human generations; but St. Francis de Sales seems to have agreed rather with the former, as when, in his second sermon for All Saints, dwelling on the infinite multitudes (his own words) of the saints who were not known to be such in this life, he breaks forth with, "But, O God, how many other saints do you think there have been in shops as well as in deserts!"

Upon the whole, then, we want among the gravest companions, or in ourselves, however thoughtful, some one who, like

* Lettres de Lacordaire, p. 168.

† Les Conseils de la Sagesse, 333.

Richard of St. Victor, "does not consider the multitudinous misery without considering also the multitudinous good, so passing from desire and prayer, one who opposes the latter to the former, and implores mercy for mankind, being as it were for that object a daily mendicant before the doors of the blessed*." It does not follow however, do me the honour to believe, that we want any thing silly, maudlin in expression, or morbid either in feeling, a mere satiety of commendations, such as is ascribed sometimes to one of your amiable amateur recluses, elaborating some favourite idea far away from the noise and bustle of actual life, a weak, one-sided, crotchety element; but we require a large and equitable view, a true sympathy, such as should belong to every man of a stout heart and strong head, of wide experience and varied capacities, enjoying with all his charity, the broadest, healthiest, and most harmonious combination of mental power.

A principle common to the Reformation and to Jansenius is, according to the remark of M. de Sacy, "that in the state of fallen nature man sins always and necessarily, if an especial grace does not keep him from sin." The proposition, we are told, has been formally condemned by the Church, and therefore I suppose that we need not trouble ourselves much about it, granting even that it did not involve a mere question of words. But with the philosophers of the eighteenth century, whose thoughts are more apt to be thrown at us on the Thames than those of Jansenists, the case was not mended; so that in standing up with simplicity in defence of mankind, Vauvenargues had against him adversaries of very opposite character, while he showed himself as firm in stopping Pascal, whom, in other respects, he so greatly admired, as in refuting La Rochefoucauld himself†. When the celebrated "Maxims" made their first appearance, the book was accordingly approved of by men who had adopted Jansenism. "They were," says Cousin, "chiefly not over-wise ecclesiastics or devout people of a limited understanding, who being accustomed with Port-Royal to exaggerate the doctrine of original sin, in order to exaggerate

* In Cant. Cantic.

† Ste. Beuve, Causeries du Lundi, iii.

that of grace,—enjoyed a triumph now in seeing this announcement by a nobleman, of the perversity of human nature; though the danger was great, since if one did not advance as far as Jansenism, one stopped with La Rochefoucauld in an egotism without bounds and without remedy. These religious men, however, fell into the snare at once. They extolled the book as a school of Christian humility, the noblest course of philosophy that had ever been given to the world, a fine commentary on the text of St. Augustin. If there were only left in the world that book and the Gospel it were sufficient! And yet these pious admirers should have observed that its author believed no more in religion or grace than in goodness, since he calumniated the motives of those under the inspiration of the former with as much avidity as he did those who were for verifying Seneca,—seeking in their conduct, as in that of Madame de Longueville, only subject for a new maxim. In general, however, it is very pleasant to find that while these devout men were approving of the book, women, even those attached to the doctrine of Jansenius, condemned it. Neither the Countess de Maure, nor Anne de Rohan, nor the Duchesse de Liancourt, nor Marie de Hautefort, allowed themselves to be entrapped by the Maxims. 'They were not yet arrived,' as one of them said, 'at that degree of capacity in which one believes no more in honour, or goodness, or probity. They were of opinion that these qualities might still be found among the living.' The woman's instinct on this occasion saw clearer than the learning and theology of the grave doctors of Port-Royal, and they pronounced the maxims of La Rochefoucauld to be false and dangerous*."

However, the evil did not terminate even with the Jansenists and philosophers. Many men, too ignorant of letters to know any thing of either, are apt to fall into the same train of thought. "They believe in no goodness in man or woman. They will see a child smile at its mother, and say that it thinks of itself; the wife at the bedside of a sick husband, the priest who prays, the labourer who toils, are all accounted for in the same way. They respect and love nothing, neither prayer, nor industry, nor love. They make out egotism to be the sole invi-

* Cousin, Madame de Sablé.

sible god of this world*." Great sillies! They never pulled on the river in their lives, I would add, or went out for the day to realize a serene hour.

The predominance of evil in the world seems an oriental doctrine. King, in his treatise, "de Origine Mali," asserted and proved that there is more moral good on the earth than moral evil. "And there are ten good acts," says he, "done by those we call bad men for one ill one." If you will credit ancient holy books you will believe that God is quick to discover the former, and to estimate them very differently from the world. The abbot Paphnutius was a great man of singular virtue in the Thebaïde, and having once prayed that it might be shown him to whom he was like, he received for answer, You are like that certain flute-player who wanders about the streets of the neighbouring city; and when he had sought him out he inquired after his manner of life, and the other said to him ingenuously that he was a great sinner and a dissipated fellow, and had even been a robber; and when the hermit inquired whether he had ever acted well, he replied that really he could not remember any thing of that sort, excepting, perhaps, that once on a time while leading a robber's life he had delivered a young woman from his companions, and escorted her home in safety,—that another time, finding a beautiful woman wandering and weeping in a wild place, who told him on his inquiring the cause that, on account of her husband's debts, he had been repeatedly thrown into prison and scourged, that her three sons had been sold, and that she had now fled from the apparitors and officers, and had been fasting since three days, whereupon he said that he had great compassion on her, and led her to a cave, and gave her 300 pieces of gold, and went with her to the town and delivered her husband and her children; all this was long ago, and he had never thought of it since. And when Paphnutius heard him speak so, he sighed, and said that he was not conscious of having ever practised such goodness himself, and he told the robber how God had estimated these actions of his past life; and the poor musician was so delighted to hear it that he ever afterwards changed the melody of his

* Jules Janin.

flutes and lyres into that of the spiritual music, and passed the rest of his life happily in hymns and prayers. On how many of our poor, and even of our outcasts, who may have had only their cup of cold water to give, may not Omniscience be at this moment smiling thus! As for others, besides that many offend who never think of striking immediately at heaven, "it often happens," says Richard of St. Victor, "for a mind to be even uniformly corrupted, and yet by penitence to be reserved for the divine mercy*." And then there is the consideration of the position in which the majority of mankind so providentially, as Lacordaire suggests, find themselves; for, as he so profoundly remarks, "a life of labour, and hardship, and suffering is favourable to the development of good, because humiliations and work under all forms tend to purify, to banish vain and false thoughts, to diminish means of evil, to cut off occasions for it, and, in fine, to retain us before God in a state conformable to the expiation which is the only source of our salvation. Not that enjoyment is in itself evil, or labour in itself good, but that they can really present in their consequences certain signs by which we may judge of the moral condition of individuals and of nations. That being the case, suffering being a good symptom, and its absence an evil symptom, it is possible," as this great thinker concludes, "to draw a certain horoscope for the appreciation of the moral state of the human race. We have, in fact, only to ask ourselves which has the predominance, suffering or enjoyment, labour or rest? Assuredly the answer is not difficult." But to return to our canon of St. Victor. "What delight can there be," asks this great teacher, "in considering the dark abyss of the human heart?" Then citing the words "propterea memor ero tui," he adds, "there, and then he will be delighted†." This, you perceive, is not exactly recommending the way of Juvenal, who has been justly, perhaps, reproved for a "a malignity of heart which made him think the corruption that he exposed general." No doubt every one, with a grain of honesty in his composition, will feel inclined to say with M. de Sacy, "For my part, if I should wish to paint man in the worst colours, I should not have

* De Eruditione Hominis interioris, lib. ii. 29.

† ii. 35.

to go far to seek my model." But that is not what our antagonists are thinking about:

> "Ut nemo in sese tentat descendere, nemo!
> Sed præcedenti spectatur mantica tergo."

Discussions on this subject, however, are happily not required here. It is sufficient to say that, in order to justify the turn of mind that we are demanding as a needful qualification even for a party of pleasure, there is not wanting good ground supplied by the observation of wisest men as well as by our own daily experience of the phenomena of life around us.

Many writers of formal books have, it is true, a set of stereotyped phrases at command, with which they, and subsequently their readers, think to make out a strong case respecting the criminality of mankind, and of the human spirit. He that is giddy thinks the world turns round. In general, viewing human nature under a very sad aspect, counting all its dark spots, and all its wrinkles, moral anatomists laying bare and dissecting the soul in a manner to terrify the beholder, they would have us distrust, condemn, or, at all events, judge the whole world; but, after all their observations, it is not so, perhaps, that living men and women in general play their respective parts; nor is it quite so clear that these self-constituted professors have done justice to what they attempted to explain. They are often, generally speaking, mere vulgar slanderers of their fellow-creatures, condemned even by the noble example of the ancient poet who could say of his own book,

> "Candidus a salibus suffusis felle refugi:
> Nulla venenato littera mista joco est."

Books that stir these matters are not in the boat with us; but, unfortunately, in conversation there are many who, from time to time, drop words that seem to indicate a desire to follow them. Richard of St. Victor, as we have seen, but we can't observe it too often, does not approve of such views. "It is the property," he says, not mincing matters, "of wickedness always to suspect that what is seen is wrong, to give a sinister interpretation to all things, to indulge in disparagement and detraction, just as it is a characteristic of the same disposition to

reprehend the divine judgments, to hesitate in faith, and to murmur at the chastisements of God*." "A man," he says elsewhere, "ought to avoid thoughts of suspicion, and anger, and bitterness, and the like†." The very thoughts, you see, he condemns. He returns to the subject. "There are three orders of teeth in this beast—there is speaking evil, oblocutio, a certain biting and reprehensory discourse—sometimes directed against the evil which is really in a man. It is a dissemination of ill opinion. There is, again, derogation, or the overthrowing of a good opinion, and, in fine, detraction, or the attenuation of a good opinion. All," he adds, "are denounced by the Psalmist ‡;" and all these modes of taking away benevolence from human life are directed, not alone against individuals, but also, as the daily press can testify, against classes, against nations, and, in fine, with the exception of some few that it happens to be the fashion to glorify, against mankind in general. The truth is, as Cervantes says, "one must know a great deal, and hold one's self well upright in one's stirrups," or, as we in the boat would say, throw one's self well back, if one wishes to converse for two hours without touching the limits of calumny and detraction. Malicious and suspicious words come to the tongue like flies to honey. Here we need not dwell. We may dismiss such dissipators of serene thoughts with the words of Lady Peregrine to Sir Solitary Plot—

> "I thank you for your counsel, but it needs not.
> I pity the condition of this gentleman,
> That makes his life a penance to seem wise.
> He talks of arts, and is the greatest enemy
> To himself with his vain fears."

"That all men are liars is not a proposition," says Balzac, "intended to make us distrust the human race. If it were literally true, we should be all barbarians; society would be dissolved; there would be neither citizen, nor family, nor republic. The lies, therefore, of which all men are guilty, are not so much the

* Declarationes ad B. Bernardum.
† In Cant. Cantic. cix.
‡ De Conditione Hominis interioris, lib. iii. 9.

fault of their will as of their understanding, not so much vice as ignorance. They do not know the truth, but they do not corrupt it nor wish to deceive either themselves or others. All that the sentence means is that the knowledge which they have of things is so little, that they can hardly speak without error." "I must confess," says an English classic author, "there is nothing that more pleases me in all that I read in books or see among mankind, than such passages as represent human nature in its proper dignity. On the contrary, these modish authors of France and England," alluding to the infidel philosophers of the eighteenth century, "who depreciate it, and consider it under its worst appearances, put me out of humour with myself, and at every thing about me. I detest their habit of giving mean interpretations and base motives to the worthiest actions." Madame Helvétius, when this rage was at its height, felt the same impression, and said to the Abbé Morellet, "If I converse with Chamfort any morning I am sad all the day afterwards." This remark is more to our purpose than if we were even to notice the detestable cruelty of such language, and even its political evil, even where it finds an object to which it is applicable, though these latter features are not to be overlooked elsewhere; for, as an old writer says, "where shame is enforced too much upon the delinquent, it begets rather an audacious defence of the action than repentance. Soft rain slides to the root and nourishes, where great storms make a noise, wet but the skin i' the earth, and run away in a channel."

After all, if we apply these observations more immediately to our own times, it will be found, that bad as we are, these generations are, at least in many respects, better than they are often said to be. There are a great many fine fellows and many holy saints around us who are never chronicled in the newspapers. We have not on all occasions to complain like Tacitus, and say, "tam sæva et infesta virtutibus tempora;" nor like Cicero, "tempora timens inimica virtuti." There is much indeed, heaven knows, to be desired; there is a dangerous, not to say perfidious, race too abroad, whose thoughts and doings are not exactly lovable; but the masses are not so inspired any where. There is not a poor street in London in which there is not some soul that abhors what is base, and loves and adores what is

generous. It is forgotten what they would be if they had no knowledge, in a general way, of the Christian obligations; it is forgotten what is nature wholly abandoned to itself. We live, whether men will or not, in an atmosphere of grace, even in this poor world of ours, including rivers and public gardens. Our youth could not be described even in the lines referring to a former age that was with all its faults Christian:

> "By hundreds prompt for blows and blood,
> Each train'd to arms since life began,
> Owning no tie but to his clan *."

Neither is our civilization, however on some sides vulnerable, that described and stigmatized by the Roman satirists. In the days of Augustus to have talked like Juvenal had been madness; and to apply his censures to the mass of simple people in our time, would be unfair. It would be simply ridiculous now to exclaim,

> "——— quis iniquæ
> Tam patiens urbis, tam ferreus ut teneat se?"

Independent of the mental trouble and bitterness which such exaggerated views of human wickedness directly produce, we should reject them here as a source of general unbelief; of which we shall show some future day the consequences as respecting the enjoyment we are seeking; for, in fact, to affirm, like the French sophists, or the well-intentioned, unconscious men who on this one point adopt their views, that people are worse than they really are,—that Christians in these times, without taking into consideration the secret societies, are degenerating like the ancient pagans, declining to an irremediable fall,—to maintain that the opinion of their being secured from such a fate is only a brilliant hypothesis, unfounded in any facts, seems to be rather going in search of a source of moral scepticism and unbelief that, when opened, will refresh no one. But, as I said, this is at present beside the question.

We require, then, that our companions should be disposed to think well of people generally, and even to feel a sort of affection for them, following the example that men suited for the

* Lady of the Lake.

enjoyment of serene hours have always presented, like Addison, "having good will and kindness for every man and woman in the world," or like Pope, of whom Lord Bolingbroke said, that "he never knew a man who had a more general friendship for mankind." Richard of St. Victor, interpreting the Apocalypse, and coming to the words, "of the tribe Nephthala ten thousand signed," says, "Nephthala signifies latitude. These are they who by the affection of charity perform the works of goodness*." He cites an instance that might shame some who have seen the Thames, and says, "A certain monk known to me was of such charity, and had so put on the bowels of compassion, that he excused all men, interceded for all, an acceptor, not of persons, but of necessities†." What wisdom in these last words! what tenderness! the thing the poor fool wanted! "I have heard say," we read in the Tatler, supplying another example, "that the present Pope never passes through the people, who always kneel in crowds and ask his benediction, but the tears are seen to flow from his eyes. He is touched with so extensive a benevolence that it breaks out into a passion of tears." Is not this better than the example of others who practically ignore all such sentiments, or, by turning them into ridicule, do every thing in their power to counteract their consequences? Moreover, if we would arrive at any great proficiency in this art, it will be necessary for us to cultivate a love for people without any reference to ourselves, and wholly independent of any possible advantage or pleasure that can result to us from liking them. We must learn to love each as being, to use the language of Grotius, already cited, but it can never be too often, "animal carissimum Deo." It is well, and an incomparable element of serenity to lose that irritable and passionate manner of loving a few particular persons in relation to ourselves; to lose that ardour of personality in their regard, and to love them with a disinterested and devoted, and at the same time universal and intellectual love; and there can hardly be found, at least on the river, any one who does not possess some quality or other in which the understanding may not feel an interest. How many respectable persons resemble, in one point, Louis XIV., of whom an im-

* In Apocalyps. lib. ii. 9. † In Cant. Cantic. xxxi.

partial critic says, "With all his great and excellent qualities he had this great fault, he cared for no one but himself. He loved even his family only as part of himself, and that more than France." What in reality care many, whose ruling passion is for personal promotion and aggrandizement, for military glory and increased pay, for commercial supremacy and success on 'Change, for promoting factions in the state, and for mere political intrigue in parliament;—what, we may ask, care any of such people for mankind? About as much as the two Dionysiuses cared for philosophy when Plato tried to induce them to embrace it. "He might as well," says a great author, "have asked tigers in a sheepfold to prefer a dish of green peas*." We do not relish the jargon of philanthropists; but the deeds of some men justify the answer, verifying in their case—which, however, is exceptional—what Bellamente says too absolutely, that

> "——— the wolves are honester
> Than mankind is to man."

What think you of the tyrants—the great, intelligent rulers, as some would now call them—who, for an idea, were said to have made "a nation of dead?" What of the Christian monarchs who, in that respect, followed the old pagan road? "O wretched ye of mortals!" exclaims Adrastus, "why do ye possess spears, and cause slaughter against each other? Cease! and having ceased from toils, guard the cities, quiet with the quiet, and pass through life with ease." You see there were even pagans who may be cited against these extollers of manslaughter on a great scale, while with us who should know better, this passing through life with ease, when it can be practised with honour, will be a thing rather suspected and discountenanced. In fact, there are not wanting instances of grave and thoughtful men to whom all the sweets of affection are thought to be interdicted, who, as a kind of compensation, avow their ardent inclination to witness the carnage of a battle-field; as if wars were charming things, and wooings execrable. But this, perhaps, without mounting to another cause, comes of their never going out for the day. Our excursionists, at all events, are wiser; they feel

* L. Hunt.

like Fenelon, saying, "The human race is but one family, dispersed over the face of the earth. All people are brothers, and ought to love each other as such. Woe to those impious men who seek a cruel glory in the blood of their brothers. O kings! say not that war is to be desired for the sake of glory. True glory is not found where there is no humanity. Whoever prefers his own glory to the sentiments of humanity is a monster of pride, and not a man." Writing at a time when national glory —without the poor excuse of seeking to propitiate the bloodthirsty, and thereby save their crowns—was invoked as a justification for all violations of humanity, he exclaimed, "What monstrous glory! Is it possible sufficiently to abhor and despise the men who have so forgotten humanity as to desire it? No, no; far from being demi-gods, they are not even men. They ought to be for ever in execration. Oh, what care should kings take respecting wars! They ought to be just; but that is not enough. They must be also necessary for the general good." Accordingly the Dauphin, who so loved hours and even excursions like ours, is represented by the Duc de Saint-Simon as having learned "from the great and holy maxim that kings are made for the people, and not the people for kings, to look on war in such an odious light, that the ears of the world were offended at his plain speaking *." So that perhaps even then, it was the world, and not the ruler, who should be held most responsible for what followed. In the preceding reign Balzac spoke to the same purport; and though on a trite subject, the passage is so remarkable, that no one will blame me for citing it. He is addressing the queen. "The people, madam, are not nourished by the great news which comes from your armies, or by the high reputation of your generals. Their appetites are more gross, and their thoughts more attached to earth. Glory is a passion they know nothing of; it is too spiritual for them. They would rather have more corn and fewer laurels. This Mars, madam, of whom both conquered and conquerors complain, is an eccentric and capricious deity, without either constancy or reason. To-day he deserts the cause of which yesterday he was the partisan. He takes pleasure in affronting pru-

* Tom. x. 113.

dence and in dishonouring good counsels by bad events. His presents are his hooks, and his favourites his victims. May I speak more to your majesty of this malignant spectre? Rome and Athens, as brave as they were wise, insulted him in their public chants. At festivals they never spoke of recalling banished felicity and fugitive virtues, till they had sent Mars into exile or to the galleys. He was cursed by those who adored him, even while they worshipped him; and among other fine titles given him by Orpheus, that of parricide was not forgotten. Impious and sacrilegious are his general epithets; so that even in those times he was the enemy of religion; and age has not made him better; he is not converted. Still he outrages religion and profanes altars. Disorder, license, and impunity march along with him. Never was he more cruel than now. The riches of the old and new world do not suffice to him. He destroys the conquered by losses, and ruins the conquerors by the expense. He is bad wherever he is—odious phantom!—and his favours are not better than his injuries." So much for him, whether pagan or Christian, to each of whose ministers, or heroes, or admirers, might be applied the line,

"Per quem tot juvenes patrio caruêre sepulcro."

"We have seen at the court," says Balzac, "a man who constantly made it his boast that he used to mend his pen with his sword." What a disagreeable devil! We don't deem it at all advisable to select such an one for companion on any of our expeditions; though indeed left to himself, here he will never come whilst he can shake his sword or hear the drum. In order to praise it better he may perhaps talk of Morglay, Excalibar, Durindana, and others, but still, for all that, as Mr. Punch would say, "Let him throw away the nasty thing," let him put his smiter up, or let him herd with such as resemble the hairy barbarians described by Tacitus, of whom he says, "if peace last for any time they leave the place to seek for war elsewhere, —quia ingrata genti quies." Such men keep mouthing ever the high-sounding phrases of glory, and even of patriotism, perhaps, as if, all the while, every one of us did not know that, as our old dramatist says,—

"——— The same rage
Which stirs two footmen to a fray, creates
War between kingdoms."

Well, even the world seems now almost to have had enough of such glory as grows guilty of detested crimes; at least, in order to release victims spell-bound from the chains of evil enchantment, and touch the key-note of their souls, it is not deemed our only resource to "sound to arms!" as when Calderon de la Barca seems to have thought that there was no alternative between succumbing to the greatest of wicked enchantments, and obeying the call to battle; for such appears to be the moral of both his "El mayor encanto amor" and his "Sorceries of Sin," "Hos encantos de la culpa"—his hero in the Auto, as well as in the drama, exclaiming,

"Now the siren song of war
Wakes my soul from all its dreams.
War and woe are in my ear,
And love must not keep me here *."

Turning a deaf ear to such a mock siren, we of the river, on the contrary, are inclined to cry out, "Adieu, glory! rust, rapier! be still, drum!" For begging pardon of the muscular, to-day, and I hope now at least, without offence, shall sound from our boat, or from our bower, the song of Anacreon, interpreted in a noble and a very Christian sense, "I wished to tell of the Atridæ, I wish to sing of Cadmus, but love alone sounds on the cords of my lyre. I had lately changed the strings and all the lyre; and then I sang with my voice the labours of Hercules. But the lyre accompanied me in return with the symphony of love. So then farewell, henceforth, heroes and kings, for the lyre sings only of love."

After these long allusions to a stern subject, rather perhaps out of our road, we may give our appalled fancy a little airing. Might one suggest then here, that the popular dislike which was entertained for the sea during the ages which even their enemies say wished to enthrone love, may have arisen partly from the idea then associated with it respecting its symbolic

* Macarthy's Translation.

interpretation, as being contrary to the sweetness of sociability? To be sure, Homer of old spoke of war and the sea as almost commutable terms—

πόλεμόν τε πεφευγότες ἠδὲ θάλασσαν.

And the tragedian speaks of the sea-goddess Thetis dwelling apart from mankind and shunning their society. The French accomplished author of a very silly book tells us that the Orientals call the sea the night of the abyss, and that in all the ancient languages, from India to Ireland, the name of the sea is analogous to that of the desert or the night. Certainly, its mere sound is, as he says, somewhat like that of reproach; its effect is to blight vegetation; the trees near it are stunted, visibly suffering, as if feeling the proximity of the great tyrant, and the withering influence of his breath. If not held by their roots they would evidently fly from him. As it is they turn their backs to the enemy, and look towards the land. This aspect of things is bad enough, at least in reference to serenity; but in the language of Christian symbolism the conclusion was worse still; for "the flight of the sea," says Richard of St. Victor, "is the extermination of bitterness *." It is on the sand of the sea that the devil stands; and by the sea-sand is signified gentility, unfruitful as to all good thoughts and works, and constantly troubled with the bitterness of vice; for the sand is sterile in good, and the sea is unstable and bitter in evil †. There will be no more sea; not that water will be annihilated, but that it will be purged from bitterness ‡. It is just possible that what was already disliked, and understood as being naturally a scene of trouble, and a cause of separation, may have been the less likely to take the fancy when viewed as symbolical of the passions which sever us from our race, and produce a sense of bitter isolation.

However, not to digress or indulge longer in any such theories, which, to say the truth, are a little too mystical to be just the thing at present; let us "return to subject" and resume our observations respecting things which are conducive to the cultivation of this art of affection for our race.

* De Extermin. vi. † In Apoc. iv. 4. ‡ Id. viii. 1.

It is not alone, then, from a sense of love for one another being just, arising out of an equitable appreciation of human worth as understood in the Christian and popular sense, nor from a desire, by cultivating it, to follow the best examples and avoid imitating the worst, that we trace the principles of this affection. It is not overrating the sensibilities or capabilities of our impressionable rovers or rowers gone out for the day to add, that such benevolence is acceptable to them from an instinctive, as well as an acquired knowledge, that it has the highest of all sanctions, having been hallowed by the example and required on the authority of God himself; for whether they are conscious of it or not, we are ordained by a law of nature to feel instinctively that we contribute to our serenity at all times, by whatever leads us in any direction to greater conformity with the will of Him in whose image we were originally formed.

Who is left in total ignorance of the great lesson of the Christian religion? or without ever having had his attention called to its reasonableness; as when Butler says, "It is manifest that nothing can be of consequence to mankind or any creature but happiness—this being all which any person can in strictness of speaking be said to have a right to. We can therefore owe no man any thing, but only to further and promote his happiness, according to his abilities. Therefore a disposition and endeavour to do good to all with whom we are in relation is a discharge of all the obligations we are under to them." We have all heard the divine words declaring that if a man does not love his fellow-men whom he has seen, there is not much likelihood of his being able to love God whom he has not seen. Who can think often enough about this Christian law of love? For without love, as an old writer says, "the moral world would be in the same frightful state as the natural world without the sun,—a chaos of confusion and darkness; and as the light of nature clearly shows us we were made for society, and that the noblest pleasures we are capable of flow from the social enjoyments, so this most kind revelation has raised our obligations to one another to the highest pitch, making love necessary for our future happiness. The property of love," he continues, "is of such a nature, that one would think, when a man was once made sensible of it, he could never be easy till he had

acquired it; for what is this duty but a way to awaken us from a destructive frenzy which was hurrying us to a fatal precipice, to restore us to our senses, and to show us on what ground we stand? Whoever was fond of being mad or coveted a delirium? And without love we see all things in a false light, and are always in danger. Who would not bless the hand that draws us out of such a state of error and blindness, and raises us to such a height of durable felicity?" "Observe how love is estimated by God," says Richard of St. Victor. "Dimissa sunt ei peccata multa quoniam dilexit multum*." She loved much; there is no distinction added as to her having only loved the Divinity. "In hoc cognoscent omnes—si dilectionem habueritis ad invicem†." "Hoc est præceptum meum ut diligatis invicem sicut ego dilexi vos." There are no exceptions made; the rule is general. But then our Catos seem to hold, practically at least, if they do not expressly affirm it, that it is only a very few individuals who are to be loved, and that not as being men, but for certain supernatural, or rather perhaps sectional reasons exclusively. But where do they find that prescribed? Is it in the sentence, "After that I saw a great crowd?" "indicating," as Richard of St. Victor proceeds to remark, "that to form an estimate of their numbers exceeds the capacity of the human mind‡. Without doubt," he adds, "he who takes away charity from man—and charity comprises in its range the publican and the woman of Samaria, the sinner and the Samaritan—takes God from him, for God is love. Woe to you who rob him thus. You take away God and you lose God, you take away heaven and you lose heaven§." Then there is your shrewd, hard-headed moralist, who comes forward with his experience to make out such love to be mere foolery. "But the kind of person that we desire will never see," as De Quincey says, "with the eyes of the poor limitary creature calling himself a man of the world, filled with narrow and self-regarding prejudices of birth and education; but will look upon himself as a catholic creature, and as standing in an equal relation to high and low, to educated and uneducated, to the guilty and the innocent." Let the other

* Luc. vii. † Joan. xiii. ‡ In Apoc. ii. 9.
§ De Eruditione Hom. interioris, lib. iii. c. 4.

harp on his old string, saying that this is sentimentalism, or that it is naturalism, sheer romance; that God does not wish us to love men irrespectively like that. No, of course not—He who died for them. They of serene hours seem to have in general short replies of this kind yielded without much thanks to them by their habits of thought, which, to use a popular expression, can shut up those who most pride themselves on their illimitable penetration. If a man has not committed idolatry, we read in Ezekiel, if he has not committed grievous crimes, and amongst these it is added, "et si hominem non contristaverit—hic justus est, vita vivet, ait Dominus omnipotens." O what humanity in Him who is above it by the height of heaven and his own unapproachable Godhead! giving us a Prince and a Mediator, and willing, as St. Paul says, "per eum reconciliare omnia in ipsum, pacificans per sanguinem crucis ejus sive quæ in terris, sive quæ in cœlis sunt." The gospel relates that Jesus wept over Jerusalem; He did not curse it—that for one burst of tears He forgave Magdalene; that even on the cross, alluding to those who nailed Him to it, He cried, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do!" Having to name our offences, in the formula which He gave when teaching us to pray, He, as it were, puts into our mouths only a diminutive to express them; it is a debt, "debita nostra," *τὰ ὀφειλήματα ὑμῶν*, or it is a false step, a fall, a blunder, *τὰ παραπτώματα*: or, as in the English version, "our trespasses," as if we were considered a set of young creatures breaking through enclosures to wander upon some few fields which were fenced round against us, for the sole reason that they contained poisonous herbs, and were not even half so pleasant as those upon which the Great Proprietor wishes us to play. And are those over whom reigns the Prince of Serenity to obtain their object, and correspond with such memories, by drawing up acts of accusation, and by cool, deliberate judgments respecting the absence of all extenuating circumstances, by giving sentence against their fellow-creatures?

Another elementary rule, then, of the art of benevolence, consists in prescribing that we must acquire, like Vauvenargues, a capacity for making allowance, for regarding faults as misfortunes, and for pardoning and compassionating. Fenelon had formed an intimate friendship with the Chevalier Destouches,

an officer in the artillery, a good scholar, but rather, as we should say, "fast." Whatever he was, Fenelon, as our Dr. Johnson would have done, loved him, and could not help telling him so, even when he scolded him. In 1714 he writes to him, saying, "If you are going to show my letter to any grave and severe censor, he will not fail to say, 'How comes this old bishop * to like a man of such conduct?' There will be a great scandal, I confess; but what can I do? The truth is there are two men in you, without any duplicity; bad for yourself, you are true and noble for all your friends." It is the amiable prelate in this instance, I opine, rather than one of these grave and severe censors that should be the model. He indeed used to protest against being misrepresented for this disposition, saying with Pliny, "neque enim amore decipior;" but there are times when we must even wink, or lose our charter. "The man who has a heart made for loving," says a celebrated author, "does not ask if the object of his love is worthy of him. From the moment that he loves, he ceases to inquire as to the past; he enjoys the present and believes in the future. If his reason tells him that there is in this past somewhat to pardon, he pardons in the secret of his heart, without sounding forth his generosity as a wonder." Well, some disposition of this kind, in a more general way, is wanted for our purpose. If, therefore, one of our crew or party hears an absent person blamed or suspected, he turns off the conversation by saying, "I have not the honour of knowing her," or him, as the case may be. In accordance with the advice of an old writer, "he will veil the infirmities of another, in order to his reformation; he will screen his offences, that he may offend no more; he will also, as he loves himself, hide the faults of another, that his own faults may also be hid; he will pity, forgive, and in silence remit his brother's trespasses, that himself may be pitied, forgiven, and his own trespasses be passed over in silence; he will keep a bridle on his tongue, that he may obtain a perfection that perhaps, without this very trial, he had never acquired, and which it is probable will raise the happy possessor to such an exalted state as without it he might never have attained." But, besides

* He was then sixty-three.

this, you see the fact is, that all belonging to this class of our population esteem themselves vassals and liegemen of heart; and the heart, you know, has always the royal right of pardon. But others will say you show want of judgment. Well, does not St. John affirm that mercy is exalted above judgment? Therefore St. Chrysostom remarks, "that Christ did not say if you fast, or if you preserve continence, you will be like your heavenly Father; but 'estote misericordes, sicut pater vester cœlestis misericors est.'" Remark, too, how it is no where said that we are to be more merciful than God, and that having forgiven others from our heart, as we generally have done, that we are to esteem ourselves better than Him, and believe that He has not forgiven them. No, no; it is an eloquent voice that says to our generation, as if he deemed a little tenderness, or, as you would say, sentimentality, not inconsistent with manliness of character, or even with the administration of justice, "Show care for the guiltily and punishably poor, for the poor who ought to be ashamed of themselves. It is nothing to relieve the widow who has lost her son, or the honest workman who has broken his arm; but it is something to use your time and strength to war with the waywardness and thoughtlessness of mankind*." "As it is," he says elsewhere, "you hardly ever address a working man upon his prospects in life, without quietly assuming that he is to possess at starting, as a small moral capital to begin with, the virtue of Socrates, the philosophy of Plato, and the heroism of Epaminondas. But there will always be in the world some of the common people, who are not altogether intelligent and exemplary. Well, these are said by the Psalmist to get into the net of wicked rich men. It is their own folly, heedlessness, or indolence that causes them to get into it; but being once in the net, the oppression of them, and making the most of their distress, are of those murderers who are said to kill and ravish them. It is to one of such victims in the hulks, that the good Bishop Bienvenu says, in the recent work from which I have already cited passages, 'If you leave this place of sorrow with thoughts of hatred and rage against men, you are worthy of pity; if you leave it with thoughts of good humour, of gen-

* Ruskin.

tleness and of peace, you are better than any of us.' Such sentiments will not please much our Philocleons, who seem ready to faint on hearing of any one being excused or pardoned, especially if they could have helped it; saying, 'How shall I forgive myself for this, that one defending him or herself,' as the case may be, 'should find indulgence! But, O heaven, forgive me! for I co-operated unwillingly, and not in accordance with my habit*.'" Truly I believe them. Such is not their custom. In former times they used to say things that happily are now incredible to our ears; for no doubt there has been a progress in the Christian spirit in this direction. What think you, for example, of a religious author, in the year 1641, treating on the good use of riches, who, speaking of cases when alms are not to be given to those demanding them, distinguishes with "certain casuists," whom by the way he does not name, and I believe it was not the will that he wanted, as one of these cases, "cum per justam sententiam judicis aliquis condemnatus esset fame perire?" Such a proviso seems to us now as fabulous. No one avowedly would go to that length at present; but if you look to the interior hardness, and to the terrible will that gives indications not to be mistaken of its existence, it is just possible that there may be men of this kind yet, like old Rominagrobis, saying,

> "Est-ce à moi que l'on tient de semblables discours?
> Tu gagnerois autant de parler à des sourds.
> Chat et vieux, pardonner? Cela n'arrive guères."

Yes, it is but too true, the goodness which consists in finding cause for compassion, when it is a question of such people as publicans and sinners, as if it even preferred them, like our Divine Model, to some respectable householders, and thought that those who are down, should be more considered than those who are well-to-do in the world—that is what our grave ones often call, to use the expression of the Inspector Javert, "la mauvaise bonté." "It is by means of that kind of goodness," say they, "that society becomes disorganized. It is easy enough," they add, "to be good; but the difficult thing is to be practical and just." Such are the "utterances" of the kind of people

* The Wasps.

we leave at home, who think us insane or mere children to talk of wishing to enjoy a serene hour. One would not of course blame them for only speaking like Randolph's Bromius, who, when detecting some boys stealing apples, under pretence of being fairies, said to his deluded master who believed them to be what they gave out,

> "——— Well, if I
> Might have my will, a whip should jerk 'em
> Into their old mortality."

But there are people to whom Rosalind's question, whether on small or great occasions, is applicable, "Who might be your mother, that you insult, exult, all at once over the wretched?" One might add, too, how bad must have been your training, even in regard to our poor river school, that you love to publish and magnify the faults of your companions. What a contrast do such people present to that great kind Catholic prince, the Duc de Guyse, when having to present his company to the queen after a victory, he bestowed praises before her, not alone on the best and bravest of the officers, but actually on some who had misconducted themselves, and even fled from danger; and when asked afterwards by some of his intimates why he had done so, he replied, "that their conduct was only fortune of war, which possibly had never before visited them, and never would again take them by surprise; and that another time they would correct themselves and act better*."

But then we shall hear perhaps that you are unable, for your part, though you cannot tell us why, to endure this and that in other people's way of going on. Very likely, but you should consider that differences and contrasts are in the order of the universe. Take only what is before you: what variety in trees and flowers! no two leaves of the same species are the same. Why not make up your mind for finding the like diversity in human beings whose characters in the more delicate tones, by a necessity of nature, are as varied as their faces? Why not even admire these differences and contrasts? loving the gay, the pensive, the lightsome, the solid, the bright, the grave? and all the

* Brantome, tom. v.

while compassionating, rather than exaggerating those faults, "quas humana parum cavit natura?" And then, too, even what we call faults—can we be always so sure about them? When you fall in with some saucy boys, as you may sometimes on the river, might it not be well to adopt the plan of a Roman emperor, who condescends to notice this precise eventuality, contemptible as it may appear. "Yes, when you meet such," he says, "ask yourself, do you think it possible that there should be no saucy boys in the world? Do not require therefore what cannot be: and moreover," he adds, "it is useful to think that perhaps nature intended that there should be this very thing that we call sauciness, to serve, as it were, the purpose of an antidote, lest the virtue of man opposed to it should degenerate into a foolish and mawkish gentleness; and in the same manner," he adds, "there may be provided for each virtue a corresponding quality, which some call a fault, to keep it within bounds*." Besides, even when detecting something that you cannot by such a process of reasoning approve, what would be more true or conducive to our particular object above all, than the reflection of the poet?

> "Si tous les cœurs étaient jeunes, justes, et dociles,
> La plupart des vertus nous séraient inutiles."

Of course, if things be taken one by one in an unnatural way, and separated from an aggregation of circumstances and doctrines, there may in such views be danger of abuse, leading to a factitious night in the intelligence when there would be small chance of safety for any one; but still, after all, the greatest lesson of wise optimism, and of the doctrine that all is for the best, is the natural fruit, not of philosophy self-subsisting, but of Christianity, which, from St. Augustine to Leibnitz, has always involved an expression of belief that evil is ordained to good, and that the effusion of love in the atonement is incomparably superior in its effects to the cause which it was provided to remedy, in accordance with the well-known words of the Church, "O certe necessarium Adæ peccatum quod Christi morte deletum est! O felix culpa quæ talem ac tantum me-

* Lib. ix. Marc. Ant.

ruit habere Redemptorem!" But to return to what is visible and proper for "the like of us," if purists will allow such a phrase, to talk about. "If things were put in a true light," some one says, "the word imperfection would not carry an unkinder idea than the word humanity." Imperfection is involved in the idea of creation; so that it does not do expressly to quarrel with it in a general way; for it does not necessarily involve the idea of evil. What is commonly understood as moral evil is a different thing. With that, no doubt, to some extent or other, we are often confronted, and even that, in half at least of our own selves; and hence has arisen a diversity of opinion respecting what should be done in its regard. One will exclaim, in an unguarded fit, with Dondole: "But I hope thou hast more wit than to show yourself a Christian to such a rascal as he is."

> "Brother, you have a vice of mercy in you,
> Which better fits a lion than a man."

It must be granted that our serene-hour-seeking people are rather apt to betray a want of wit and virtue in this respect, and to have ways of their own somewhat singular—they certainly do sometimes think and act, both on and off the river, in what others would deem a strange fashion, somewhat like that of the knight of fortune, when tears came into his eyes on hearing of the calamity of his enemy the knight of the savage, or like that Don Duardos invoking pity for the giant Dramuziando who had kept him so long in prison, or that of Prince Primaleon, Polendos, and other knights, when the sorrow which they felt for their prostrate foe took away all thought of the victory, or like that of Duardos subsequently, when he besought the King of England to treat the defeated giant, not as an enemy, but as the greatest friend he had in the world. If our ramblers borrow nothing from such manners of the old knighthood, at least on their small scale they seem at times disposed to act like the Cardinal de Coislin, of whom Saint-Simon tells a curious anecdote. He used to give a large pension to a poor broken-down gentleman at Orleans, of which see he was bishop, and even to have him always at his table when residing there. One morning his servants missed two pieces of plate, and suspected my gentle-

man of having been the thief. The bishop, at first, would not believe it; but finding that the gentleman left off coming, he began to doubt. After some days he sent for him, and in a private interview the other admitted his guilt. The bishop then said that he must have been strangely pressed for money to do such a thing, and that such want of confidence in his host and friend was very wrong. Then giving him a purse of twenty Louis, he desired him to resume his visits and forget all about it*. This was, certainly, evincing a want of wit of a certain kind; but the good cardinal had his notions, and like him, the sort of characters we are concerned with are apt to have theirs not very different from his own; for I believe that they without being professed philosopers all agree with the Emperor Marcus Antoninus, that "the best way of revenging an injury is not to become similar to him who inflicts it†." Of course, the first complainant will continue to think such conduct very irrational and improper, and all that. Though the fact is, that what he would pursue with merciless fangs, is often a very slight fault, if even criminal at all; while, in regard to his own offences, he is on the look out for praises rather than for a notice of them, the least trace of which would sting him to madness; for, as a French author says, "I know not by what strange contradiction people who are the most keen for an attack on others, are the most wounded by whatever resists themselves. Like Voltaire, they want compliments in return for injuries."

Well, for those who are on the quest of a serene hour, there can be no great difficulty in coming to a decision on all these practical points. Without having read the treatise of Nicole, they put in practice what he teaches respecting the way of having peace with men, not by pretending every minute to correct their faults, though they may seem to swarm like watermen about a fare,—infallible method of being at perpetual and injurious war,—but by slily correcting one's self a little; and it is marvellous how this latter method can change our appreciation of the character of others, for in nine cases out of ten what we blame in them is something that we should highly approve of in ourselves. However, of course they do wrong at times,

* Mém. v. 116. † Lib. vi.

there's no denying that. Choose whom you will for companions, they are good fellows—fine fellows, no doubt; gallant and true, and whatever else you like; but for all that, you need not eye them all over; you need not dissect them to a fibre, as Lord Bornwell says. It has been remarked "that the ancient world, finding any one quality or endowment in an heroic degree, deemed its possession an object of worship. Hercules had strength; but it was never objected to him that he wanted wit. Apollo was never asked whether he had strength. We hear no exceptions against the beauty of Minerva, or the wisdom of the Graces; they were glad to immortalize any one serviceable gift, and overlook imperfections in the person who had it; but with us it is otherwise, for without being more sublime or consistent Christians for it, we reject many eminent virtues if they are accompanied with an apparent weakness, and hence not alone," as he remarks, "our delight in reading lampoons and scandal," but also what I venture to suggest in addition, our incapacity for enjoying a serene hour. What could you make of one who would turn a boating party into a School for Scandal—every action or word of a comrade into a fault to be thought upon to his prejudice, and every slight injustice or imposition by people who earn their subsistence on the banks of the river into a casus belli, or a case for law, or for a letter to the Times? Such a person would be like one of those rude sailors who have nothing on their tongues but "rope's end!" We don't want him on our waters; we prefer people who are easily taken in, and content to be so; for, in fact, as the Duc de Saint Simon says, "a man of honour is easily deceived by one who has no honour, and who plays with that of others."

"I don't approve of sin," says the virtuous and noble Balzac, "but I can bear with a little human infirmity. I endure what I can't correct. I don't frighten those whom I want to catch. I put him on board without telling him where I mean to take him to; and I get him to make a journey when he thought only of having a short walk." Pliny, so far worthy of imitation, describes his own conduct as conformable to such feelings: "when I retire," he says, "to this garden apartment, I fancy myself a hundred miles from my own house—and take particular pleasure in it at the feast of the Saturnalia, when every

other part of my villa resounds with the mirth of my domestics: thus I neither interrupt their diversions nor they my studies." Though approving of no pagan Saturnalias, this is the disposition we want now. It is that which the grave M. de Sacy so well describes, saying, "I like to find not the relaxed casuist, but the man who has compassion for humanity, the friend of virtue, but not the proud Stoic or the pitiless censor;" above all, not the man whose spiritual pride condemns all the world but himself. Massillon, as this elegant writer observes, would have disgusted rather than edified his intelligent audience by his sermon on the final judgment, if he had not at the moment exclaimed in a parenthesis, "je ne sépare pas mon sort du vôtre." Morally viewed, that does not change the matter much; but as an instance of rhetorical art it shows on what a little thing depends the force of an orator, and the immortality that he gains by it.

An indulgent turn of mind then is required, and along with it too, much patience. "Optimum eleemosynæ genus," says Richard of St. Victor, "corripere inquietos, consolari pusillanimes, patientem esse ad omnes *." "Such a forgiving mind knows," he says, "how to excuse what is wrong, and to ascribe what is said to infirmity or imperfection rather than to malice, and to believe that the person who exceeds in words will, after a time, repent for having done so. For it does not attend to his present disposition, but to his former tranquillity or friendship, and to the man who will shortly return to himself †."

Let it be observed, too, all this while, that more than fine words in regard to benevolence in this form is needful to secure the true serenity of a happy hour. It is not merely theoretic lenity and general indulgence, without the presence of one needing it, that must be cultivated as a mental habit. The disposition actually and personally to pardon and to pity in particular instances without saying a word about it, is requisite.

It is remarkable to find a heathen writer expressing an opinion on this subject which might shame many now-a-days who are apt to decry those who put in a word for this quality as

* De Erud. Hom. int. ii. 38.
† Id. in Cant. Cantic. xix.

being only so many maudlin sentimentalists. "Surely," says Pliny, "a lenity of disposition, even in persons who have the least occasion for clemency themselves, is, of all virtues, the most becoming. The highest of characters, in my estimation, is his, who is as ready to pardon the moral errors of mankind, as if he were every day guilty of some himself; and at the same time as cautious of committing a fault as if he never forgave one. The great Thrasea used to say, 'He who, in a certain way, hates vice, hates mankind.'" That is, certainly, going very far; and yet, as we are on board a Christian boat, or belong to a Christian party of some sort or other, we have to enter on higher considerations than any that are involved in weighing the opinions of a Paynim, though it be Pliny himself, so amiable, and considering his epoch, and consequently his opportunities, it is to be feared so unfortunate.

"'Culpas dimittere cœleste est, vindicare terrenum*.' For whatever you pardon in me," continues Nicholas of Clairvaux, expressing these considerations, "you will obtain pardon yourself when you come before the Judge. He has set us the example; for without any interval are conjoined the tears of the sinner and the indulgence of the Saviour." So the whole philosophy of the matter is clear and determined for us; and, therefore, owing to the unseen but wonderful connexion that exists between internal and external things, no one is eligible to proceed on this quest of a few hours of profound and bright serenity who brings with him a different spirit. Elsewhere, of course, in public life, and in solemn places, there are principles involved which sometimes necessarily and rightly lead to different consequences; but these do not concern us for the time further than as furnishing an occasion to suggest, after hearing a remark of Swift, that even there it might be no great harm to remember somewhat of the things heard in the pleasure-boat, and required on our frolicsome expeditions; for he says somewhere, "As for earthly judges, they seldom have it in their power, and God knows whether they have it in their will, to mingle mercy with justice. They are so far from knowing the hearts of the accuser or the accused, that they cannot know

* Nic. Clarævал. Epist. xl.

their own; and their understanding is frequently biassed, although their intentions be just. They are often prejudiced to causes, parties, and persons, without being sensible themselves that they are so." However, though it is needless to repeat it, this does not belong to our province; and yet we may take occasion from it to observe, that there are not wanting examples even in these stern and frigid regions that would do for the smiling sunny corner, and that might be remembered with advantage after they leave it by private persons in common life. Argenson, for instance, father of the marquis whose memoirs are so celebrated,—at the head of the police in Paris, which he kept in such order, with a face that would strike one who did not know him with terror, as if he were one of the three judges of hell,—amidst all his painful functions, that seemed wholly of severity, could show himself, not only in private with his obscure friends enjoying to his heart's content a serene hour, but even when acting in his official capacity, as one before whom "humanity easily found pardon*." Sir William Temple says that the sanguinary laws of England for preventing common crimes "are not of ancient date†." It is well to keep that fact in mind, and suffer it to modify some opinions. We might with advantage too, sometimes, when conversation turns on persons that we don't like, hear repeated those words which Rome once read with tears of joy, and which history has graven in golden letters, and which, if carried out in defiance of gravity and policy, would in every generation be sufficient to work miracles in the social and political order, and immortalize a ruler: "Let the least precious lives be spared. Let the good and the bad blood be spared. Let prisoners have liberty; let exiles return. And would to God that we could bring back the dead to life!"

Returning, however, to the sort of puerile scenes in which we play our parts so far removed from tribunals, and to the kind of offenders, poor fellows that would live, so little terrible, with whom we are liable to be confronted, let us take note of the necessity which exists for our acquiring the habit of practical forgiveness, with all its ways of letting people alone, and giving over thinking about them; for, as for the mere word, it is not

* St. Sim. t. xv. 255. † Miscell. p. 111.

worth a nutshell. A French critic has said lately of an eminent author, that he had no objection to reconciliations which could be announced with a flourish of trumpets, "il embrassait quelquefois son adversaire, mais sur le balcon." It is not on the cultivation of such a spirit, or of such ways, that we are now insisting, but, merely with a view to serene enjoyment, it is on that of a really forgiving temper. Even when fairly launched upon the Thames, or while resting on some bank after a long pull upon its calm waters, some offender or other, male or female, will perhaps be submitted to you, or the memory of some offence recur to your mind; and then, as Isabella says, "Yes; I do think that you might pardon him, or her, and neither heaven nor man grieve at the mercy." "Without knowing particulars," says Butler, "I take upon me to assure all persons who think they have received indignities or injurious treatment, that they may depend upon it, as in a manner certain, that the offence is not so great as they themselves imagine. If we could be really unprejudiced, we should frequently discern that to be in reality mere inadvertence and mistake in another which we fancy to be malice or scorn." This holds, though your remembrance, like poor Viola's, may be very free and clear from any "image of offence done to any man or woman." So it was with Huon of Bordeaux when the traitor Amauri assailed him in the wood. "Sir," he said to the Abbot of Cluny, who questioned him, seeing the danger, "I do not know a living man in the world to whom either I or my brother have done any thing to cause displeasure or make him hate us." You may be able to say as much; but some one may injure you for all that, or be thought to have had the will to injure; and then, if you imbibe the spirit which is a qualification for the enjoyment of bright hours, you will,—placing yourself in that person's situation, and considering all that ought to be considered, which is often enough to fill up a summer's day,—come to something like a state of feeling a kind of love for that foolish individual, "not so much," as Richard of St. Victor says, "by the deliberation of reason, as with the affection of the mind*," forgetting absolutely the offence, whatever it may have been; and, as a French writer

* In Cant. Cantic. xxxi.

says, "forgetting is the exact word to use, for clearness of memory on such occasions is often also resentment." So, under what is commonly esteemed provocations, you will be able to show a noble temper, a chivalrous disposition; for it was the maxim of our old knighthood, as we read in the Palmerin of England, that "no person ever refused mercy who did not afterwards stand in need of it." Good heavens! if we want to be only honest, what else ought we to evince on all occasions? "A virtuous person," says Balzac, taking a very delicate case, "should never pronounce sentence against certain sorts of sinners, since our Lord did not do it or condemn the sinner." Of course no one should act against common sense, or oppose public and manifest truth; but on these occasions, he continues, "of which I speak, such a man ought to lament for those whom others insult over; and when he is told that they are sinners, he should be content with silence, or with saying that they are unhappy. I should like," he proceeds to say, "if it were possible, that where a woman finds most weakness she should show most goodness, and that virtue should never be attended by bad humour." Yes; you hear of sad and perilous declines, of bitter consequences. We have glanced at some of them before now. They're much to blame. No denying it. The offence is clear, as Othello says,

> "Nay, that's certain; but yet the pity of it,
> Iago!—O Iago! the pity of it, Iago!"

True, the fall was great,—true, the thoughtlessness could not be surpassed. You remember her who in the old ballad avowed all this,

> "But yet a gentle minde she bore
> To helplesse people that were poore;
> She still redrest the orphan's crye,
> And watch'd by those condemn'd to dye.
> She still had ruth on widowes' tears,
> She succour'd babes of tender yeares;
> And never look'd for other gaine
> But love and thankes for all her paine."

Moved by such memories, you forgive, you intercede; you dare to utter with tears and with reserves a kind of panegyric

perhaps, such as we have been lately listening to; you are weak, dangerous, you compromise the most important interests, will the world, and all but the lovers of serene hours, say. Nay, thou thing of no bowels; but as Contarini, the duke, pronounces, "you show a charity, if I have heard a truth in some sad stories;" and, what will at least do you no harm, you verify, too, the immortal lines,

> "———— mollissima corda
> Humano generi dare se natura fatetur,
> Quæ lachrymas dedit. Hæc nostri pars optima sensus."

> "———— Quis enim bonus—
> Ulla aliena sibi credat mala? Separat hoc nos
> A grege mutorum *."

Admitting the truth of all this from a Christian point of view, as, indeed, one needs must, do you, nevertheless, ask what has such a disposition to do with serene hours? For that matter the thing is clear enough; you have only to observe how Pliny shrewdly concludes his letter when interceding with Sabinianus for a certain youth who had offended. "Do not," he says, "make him uneasy any longer; and I will add, too, do not make yourself uneasy; for a man like you cannot be long angry without feeling great uneasiness." If people were to take a turn or two in the garden of Epicurus in this way of forgiveness, though it would not see them arrived at the last change of horses before reaching perfection, it is not exactly Christianity, I believe, that would pick a quarrel with them, or interrupt their journey. St. Chrysostom, and in later times a superior of the Minims at Rome, undertook to show that riches, honour, reputation, nobility, freedom, beauty, and pleasure are found in the love of enemies and in the pardon of injuries,—they undertook to show that such qualities were a source of riches to kings, of honour to subjects, of reputation to every one, of nobility to the most obscure, of freedom to the oppressed, of beauty in the eyes of all the world, and of pleasure to those who are in greatest straits; they undertook to show all this from history, and from daily experience, and, what's more, they proved it.

* Juv. xv. 181.

In fine, another element of the art of affection for mankind seems to be constituted by what we may call the habit of personal observation,—of studying our fellow-creatures, not in newspapers, in books of fiction, or even in histories, but with our own eyes looking at them, as we should look to judge of shrubs or flowers, or as a philosopher would examine any curious piece of mechanism submitted to his investigation, or, if we admit Mr. Ruskin's distinction between the ancient and modern landscape painters, investigating things as the latter examine life around them, and not like the former, who are content, as he imagines, with a sort of conventional representation irrespective of what is actually presented to them in the visible world.

Now, here is a point for which I would call to aid all my energy; it is a pet trick with some, but easily learned by any one that won't disdain it. I am going to utter things that will sound very puerile; still don't be angry, but have patience with me to the end.

In general, and without considering these few who in every country belong to what may be called the exceptional classes, we have only to see people to like them, to take a fancy to them. What we dislike and hate is an ideal of our own formed by reading newspapers or books of travels. Charles Lamb was one day invited to dinner to meet some who were strangers to him. "Oh, don't ask M—— and N——," said he to his host, "I hate them!" "Hate them?" was the reply, "why you never saw them in your life." "Well, of course," responded Lamb, "you don't think that I hate any body I *have* seen, do you?" We spoke long ago of cultivating the habit of watching people in the interest of æsthetic studies for the sake of admiring the beautiful workmanship of God. Here we have to consider the advantages of the same habits when formed and nourished in the interests of love and charity for the sake of liking people better. To apprehend, and see, and feel the beautiful, in order to express it, is much; but to perceive and observe it, in order to cultivate and purify that sensibility which is the necessary element of all great talents and of all great virtues, is more. What we require now, then, is that delicacy of organ and of soul which seizes the lineaments of a mysterious and profound moral

beauty under the covering of flesh, and which leads the heart to contract an intimate affection for those in whom it can be traced. Now, this habit is an innocent habit, both an humble and a religious thing; for it is incompatible with pride, and it involves more or less a certain sound and healthy state of mind, to which it furnishes matter for noble contemplations and for pure affections, while it entertains in us, by means of such angelic observation, a true life, a permanent life, and not a mere passing emotion*.

We have already noticed the need of society which human nature in a general way feels; but what we should observe here is the advantage of regarding practically, so as to influence our words and actions, and even our countenances, all the people that we see as belonging to one family, and of forming, as it were, a personal attachment to every one of them. There is a sort of *ourishness*, to use a word of Coleridge's, in the way that some people speak of the country or the town they live in that makes what they say rest pleasant on one's feelings. With views very different from those of a socialist, one might wish you to be almost of the opinion at times of poor Praxagora, that it would be a capital thing if we could only make the city one house, having broken up all into one; so that people might go into each other's houses, like the sound of the chimes on some tall tower, that becomes familiar and dear to every one. Of course, this is but the idle romantic side of the sentiment; but still there is something solid at the bottom of it when it is affection which aims at having as many things as possible common to all. As for the acquirement of this disposition, no doubt a man is born with talents for benevolence, and for this kind of house-breaking, as much as for music, poetry, painting, or any science; but still art can do somewhat in the way of its cultivation, and one should try, therefore, to prevail on people to apply to it by inducing them to get into the habit of kindly watching others, to observe the good, and true, and beautiful that lie within them; for though you might esteem it a poor item by the side of other accomplishments, there is no art more

* L'Evêque d'Orléans, Lettre sur les études qui peuvent convenir aux loisirs d'un homme du monde.

delightful, or more fruitful in results that have to do with our especial purpose. "When you want thoroughly to enjoy yourself," says Marcus Antoninus, "think upon the virtues of those who live with you, or near you, the industry of this one, the modesty of that one, the generosity of another, and so on, remarking what is amiable in each; for nothing so delights the mind as the image of virtues in the manners of our contemporaries and neighbours, when they are presented, as it were, to its eyes, by a process which you ought to be quick to learn*." Nature, in depriving some persons of their children, seems disposed to constrain them to apply to this exercise. For what is life without it? "There is such an irresistible charm in youth," as Jules Janin says, "that when you meet any one young, let him be who he will, you would like to breathe happiness into him as in the times of the fairies †." Alas! one who has lately lost his sons may think it a sorry equivalent; but still, even for such a wrecked person, it is somewhat; for, after all, other people's children may be just as loveable as his own;—and that's what he should think to himself. "Words," as Lord Bacon somewhere says, "have a mysterious power in shooting back like a bow, and moving him who utters them." We should, therefore, contract a habit of saying to ourselves as we pass common people, There goes my brother, there is my little brother, that one there is my sister, or, that is my youngest boy, that's my eldest,—have I not reason to be proud of them? Let any one, however hard-headed and dull-hearted, only just for once try this prescription, it can't do him any harm to try it, and we may pledge ourselves that he will soon find its efficacy; it's something quite wonderful. Why should not this art be esteemed greatly in regard to highest, most transcendent things? For what is it after all but the making, as we said before, a rapid act of faith, hope, and charity as you pass each person in the street, believing that God loves him, desiring his eternal happiness, and loving him as your own soul, leaving it meanwhile to others to make on these occasions an act as rapid of incredulity, of despair, of dislike, and scorn, believing him to be worthless, assuming that there can be no heaven for him, and having

* Lib. vi. † La Semaine des Trois Jeudis.

perhaps no more interior regard for him than you feel for the first dog that passes by. But then you reply, laughing, So we are to do all this. Are we to add, Come and dine with me to-day? Yes, by all means, if circumstances admit of it. Thousands have done so before now, and thousands will do so again, saying, with wishes at least that are never wholly vain, "let their beds be made as soft as ours, and let their palates be season'd with such viands." This you think smacks of nothing but wild extravagance. But scoff as you may, for all your disdain and ingenious suggestion of difficulties, in point of fact we are brethren, we are one, and God wishes that we should be one, and that we should feel ourselves one. To be sure your ways of thinking are likely to prevail, and, as Gratry exclaims in consequence, "What a strange family is ours! Not content with being prevented unavoidably from ever seeing or hearing so many of our brothers and sisters, we must separate by arbitrary and unnecessary laws those who could have met and dwelt together in unity, contriving that even those whom we know familiarly by sight, our fellow-countrymen living around us, and our fellow-townspeople, should be absolute strangers to us, and that we should be utter strangers to them!" Now the trick that we propose, though I admit it is in general only a palliative, tends somewhat to obviate the evil of these exigencies, imposed by the conventionalism of the world.

But let us dwell on the steps by which this really curious and valuable art ascends, observing what even the philosopher remarks about the wide range to which this community of feeling should extend.

"Reason," says Cicero, "separating men from brutes, convinces them that they should seek the society of other men; that, from the charity of domestic relations, they should pass to a conjunction with the society of all their fellow-countrymen, 'deinde omnium mortalium*.'" After showing that nothing was so great and excellent as the 'honestum,' he says, "But in all this virtue there is nothing so illustrious, or so wide in its range, as the union of men and men, the society and mutual communication of advantages, and that charity of the human

* De Finibus, ii.

race which, springing originally from common parents, thence extending from house to house, leading to acquaintanceships and friendships, thence to all of the same nation, ends finally 'totius complexu gentis humanæ,' involving justice, piety, goodness, liberality, benignity, and 'comitas *.'" Have you never felt, companion, that men should think oftener than they do about the immense debt which they owe, in a personal way, to every class of their fellow-creatures? Their humour would probably in that event be more in tune with the sort of songs that we want to hear on all our expeditions. De Maistre incurred much blame by bringing forward the claim of the hangman. I own, for my part, that I should never have thought precisely of this creditor; and even now, having no inclination to settle with him, I would rather, if not discredit his mystery, at least ignore and pass him over for the moment, as being not to be named; for other reasons besides personal consideration, be polite enough to believe in the present company. In fact, I would much sooner back up the children in urging the claims of the street grinders of barrel-organs in presence of our eminent philosopher whose calculations they interrupt and confound, and whose whole nervous system they excruciate. But then to think of all that we owe to the obscure commonalty, who, in one way or other, as formerly suggested, are constantly serving us and providing for our wants and pleasures! To say nothing of guards, drivers, stokers, porters, on whose unwearied civility and firmness our comfort and our lives are so often depending, whatever use we make of the things they furnish us with, they at least are doing, and often consciously, their duty. When a Christian sees these engineers, these workmen, these bricklayers, these navvies, these assistants, these sempstresses, these errand-boys, these bargemen, all accepting a life of labour with such cheerfulness, when an earthly master can be overheard saying to a labourer, that was surly towards a companion, "I think the boy worked well," he can fancy that he hears our heavenly Master saying as much, as if anticipating those divine words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" If this be expecting too mystic a view for

* De Finibus, v.

every one to take, though why it should be thought so it would be hard to tell, at least, those who join our parties ought to possess the disposition towards the commonalty which is expressed by one who sincerely loved them, without an apparent consciousness of his debt at the moment of writing. "When in London," says De Quincey, "there was for me a pleasure, which was to be had only on a Saturday night. What then was Saturday night to me more than any other night? I had no labours that I rested from, no wages to receive; what needed I to care for Saturday night more than as it was a summons to the opera? True, most logical reader; what thou sayest is and ever will be unanswerable. And yet so it was, that whereas different men throw their feelings into different channels, and most men are apt to show their interest in the concerns of the poor chiefly by sympathy with their distresses and sorrows, I, at that time, was disposed to express mine by sympathizing with their pleasures. Now, Saturday night is the season for the chief, regular, and periodic rest to the poor, and to all that live by bodily labour; in this point all unite and acknowledge a common link of brotherhood. On this account I feel always on a Saturday night as though I also were released from some yoke of bondage, had some wages to receive, and some luxury of repose to enjoy. For the sake, therefore, of witnessing a spectacle with which my sympathy was so entire, I used often on Saturday nights to wander forth to all the markets and other parts of London whither people resort on Saturday night for laying out their wages. Then I used to listen to the conversations, join their parties, and give my opinion, which was always received indulgently. Generally speaking, the impression left upon my mind was, that the poor are practically more philosophic than the rich; that they show a more ready and cheerful submission to what they consider as irremediable evils or irreparable losses." The turn of mind indicated in this passage is that which should be insisted upon; and it is, after all, more common than we might be inclined to think it. Why, the meanest mechanic has his Saturday night, we used to say when at college. Then, again, we should think of what we owe to such writers as help to extend views and feelings of this kind, provided it be attempted in a more efficacious way, and with a

purer motive, perhaps, than can be imagined after merely reading of such talk as ours. Then, further, men should think of what they owe to poets for interesting without fatiguing them, for instructing without wearying them, for amusing them without their having reason to feel ashamed at having laughed and wept. We should not forget either what we owe to statesmen, even when it is only through human motives that they act, for labouring like drudges in order to keep peace between nations and ward off hideous wars, as before the commencement of the late Italian expedition, when they were thought to be doing more for this purpose, with that object at least, than was ever before witnessed, as there was never such occasion for it, or such difficulty either in its way, at any previous epoch of the world's history. It is Montesquieu himself who says, "The majority of princes and ministers have a good will. Only they do not know how to set about making use of it*." Many things in that respect, however, have been improved since his time. Then, descending to more common obligations, what do we not owe to children and to young people? what, above all, do we not owe to women? though by your smiling you seem to make light of it. Ah me! let us stop there. For all your smiles we are beggars, bankrupts, and can never pay a shilling in the pound; we are wretched insolvents, not deserving our certificate. Look, however, at our debt to children, and think what a house is without them. But true, I had forgotten; they almost cancel it all by what they make us suffer when they fly away selfishly to heaven, and leave us with an irremediable wound. But then, now that I have recovered countenance and somewhat of a brazen front, take only our debt to women. Infidel, do you dare to calculate that? "It is not alone that," as a great author says, "three-fourths of what we are in boyhood most of us owe to our mothers,—that if any one be frank, fearless, affectionate, a gentleman, it is the mother of such a son who is entitled to gratitude;" neither is it only that age will sometimes owe to them "the bloom and fresh breeze of the morning, renovating a life ere it sink into night;" but that at all periods of our existence, and in all relations, we are every day contracting debts to

* Pensées diverses.

them incalculable, such as in this world can never be paid. "It is the proper and natural disposition of women of quality," says Cervantes, "to have compassion on the sorrows and pains of the afflicted." True, let us believe it. But the rogue of a fellow, to confine his remark within such narrow limits! He knew well enough, too, what he was about in making this reserve; for what a delicate, and gracious, and faithful pencil had he when painting from life a gipsy girl, that beautiful Preciosa, in the Bohemian of Madrid! What gaiety is there in that mind! and what discretion too! What sweetness! what indulgence! what wisdom! Cancelling his sly reserves then, we repeat the lines of the old mystery and say,

> "Moult vaut femme en fait et dits
> Soit pauvre, basse, ou haulte."

We maintain that we are debtors to the whole sex for countless things, even for looks and tones of voice, and for the simplest unpremeditated word that drops from their lips. Brother is the term used by Costanza, the beautiful servant-girl of the inn of Sevillano, when she speaks for the first time to Avendaño when he enters the yard as a strange youth, and she wants to know what business brings him there. There was a debt incurred by hearing that one word addressed to him that should have been present to his memory for the rest of his life. Yes, just so, no exaggeration in saying this; for

> "I have known a word more gentle
> Than the breath of summer air;
> In a listening heart it nestled,
> And it lived for ever there.
> Not the beating of its prison
> Stirred it ever, night or day;
> Only with the heart's last throbbing
> Could it fade away *."

Without woman what is home? Her affections cheer, soothe, animate, direct, and save us.

> "For this is woman's world. It matters not
> Though in the trackless wilderness she dwell,

* A. Procter, Lyrics.

Or on the cliff where hangs the Switzer's cot
Or in the subterranean Greenland cell:
Her world is in the heart. Rude storms may rise,
And dark eclipse involve ambition's skies,
But dear affection's flame burns pure and well.
And therefore 'tis with such a placid eye
She soothes her loved one's pangs or lays her down to die*."

But you say, perhaps, recurring to what was observed on setting out on this very day's ramble, that what we speak of now is no debt at all, for that it has been the source of your misery; that from observing and admiring you went on to give woman up your heart; that you fell in love like any one else; and then that your course ceased to run smooth, and so all the sorrows predicted generally in such cases, but of course in your particular instance under their most aggravated form, followed. You loved her? Well, as Eugenia says, she could not help it; it was none of her fault. But pray, my good fellow, excepting for a few sighs and tears, which you might have had to pay though ever so heart-whole, were you the worse for loving her? Why, of one woman, Steel says, that "to have loved her was itself a liberal education." Go along; it still remains for you, then, to acknowledge your debt, and to exclaim with Aimwell, not in a fit of poetical enthusiasm, but prompted by the sentence of your judgment, after a cool deliberation,

"Forgive me, sacred sex of woman, that
In thought or syllable I have declaim'd
Against your goodness."

But returning to general matters; let our investigation be conducted in a more comprehensive way. Although we are not now in Paris, where Alfred de Musset says every thing, and life itself, is so open, so visible, and so public, that there is no other city in which a stranger can feel himself so much at home, even in the street, or on a bench by the way side, while I fancy it is only the will that is wanting when we can't realize his ideal near the Thames,—let us try to partake of what he commends, and for this purpose let us then watch all that passes in this great

* Sigourney.

common family of ours, every where and every day; for as the chorus with Sophocles exclaims, "How many things is it man's by seeing to know!" Truly we shall find, as Mr. Ruskin eloquently says, that "wisdom stands calling on us at the corners of the streets to obey the first plain principles of humanity, and the first plain precepts of the skies, to show mercy and compassion every man to his brother, and that none of us should imagine evil against our brother in our heart." Of course manners at the present day in England, in the higher regions at least, would not admit of our accosting strangers as formerly, and indeed still in France, could be permitted, when, for example, Petrarch, on the 15th of February, about nine o'clock in the morning, between Aix and St. Maximin,—for the minutest details on such occasions are always present to the memory as things of greatest importance,—fell in with the party of young ladies, and had that charming conversation with them which he so beautifully describes; but still, no power on earth can prevent us even here, from silently observing what passes before our eyes every day. Now, the mere habit of observation itself opens a wide world of serene enjoyment, and wholly unlike that arising from what the Duc de Saint-Simon styles "the promptitude of quickly-roving eyes to sound with a plummet souls." This latter art, exercised in drawing-rooms, he nevertheless rather perversely, unless ironically, styles "un des plus grands plaisirs dont on puisse jouir dans une cour." Here the habit, practised as Shylock would say, "in low simplicity," springs from a different motive, and is accompanied with very dissimilar results. There is no class, if it retain any show of humanity at all, that does not admit of such a scrutiny with satisfactory results, though of course, as I already said, there is not the same facility in every degree; for conventionalism, in the upper walks, sometimes causes a difficulty, if not an impossibility. Yet even there they can be got over. "Cooling myself," says an excursionist, "under some trees by the road-side, I found there a couple of 'gentlemen' about fourteen years of age, arrived before me, and, maugre their nobility, engaged in the same process. I wanted to talk, but how to set about it was the question, as they were evidently of a very tip-top order, and moreover just beginning to aspire to even the natural dignity

of swells. At first we passed each other somewhat like surly lions, but after a few side-long glances that were sullen enough, at the very first words spoken there was an instantaneous change, as if effected by magic, over the surface of this small society, and conversation became so animated that we all three resembled Justice Clark in the old comedy, crying out, 'Nay, if we all talk together, we shan't be able to hear one another.' We talked of swimming, of diving, of rowing, of cricketing, and of a thousand things on which we seemed to be exactly of the same opinion, and we parted as if from that hour we were to be friends for life. I should like to know if that was not a pleasant interlude on a summer's day?" This secret device of those who love bright hours yields a pleasure, moreover, that costs nothing, that can at least mentally be indulged in every day, and in whatever place you may happen to find yourself, provided only that you are not absolutely shut in like prisoners from seeing the human countenance. A singular prerogative, too, of this kind of interior pleasure consists in the admission that no one has a right to blame you for gratifying it. Indeed others have no business to know any thing about it, as far as you are concerned. Nor is this all. For taking a pleasure in watching with good-natured eyes what passes in the street, we have actually the express sanction of no less a personage than Richard of St. Victor: "Surgam et circuibo civitatem*." "The mind," he says, after citing these words, "should investigate the example of the imperfect as well as of the perfect. It turns itself to humility, that it may find in others what it cannot find in itself. So now it goes forth and applies to observe the good actions of others, that it may find by this labour what it might not be able to find in repose and contemplation. It rises up from quiet and goes about the city. It goes about among the good to find examples of better life; for humility makes it prefer the examples of others to what it finds within itself, remarking the special graces of different persons; so learning from one humility, from another patience, from another obedience, from another frugality, from another charity, and so on. 'Et quærit dilectum per vicos et plateas.' The lanes are narrower, the

* Cant. iii.

streets broader. By the lanes are signified the perfect; by the streets and squares we understand those of secular life, who follow a broader way innocently. The soul, therefore, perambulates the wider as well as the narrower roads, for it thinks no examples of good life to be despised; and there are many who, though keeping a lighter, and gayer, and broader way, furnish examples worthy of imitation *."

In speaking of benevolence, especially in regard to this habit, as an art that may be learned, one must be willing to admit that there is more in it than can ever be acquired without a responsive faculty, spontaneous or received within the pupil's own mind. There must be what a great author designates as a simple poetry of thought pervading your ideas; not artificial sentimentality, but a natural tendency to detect in all life a something of delicate and beautiful which lies hid from the ordinary sense. And such habits are not the mere speculative things that some would make them out to be; for, as Butler says, "to get our heart and temper formed to a love and liking of what is good, is absolutely necessary in order to our behaving rightly in the familiar and daily intercourse amongst mankind." But by care and attention any one can acquire this faculty; and where this is felt there is nothing in the way of serenity more effective. Then one delights to take an evening stroll, even alone, through streets and suburbs as if they were so many fine picture galleries, in order merely to study the charming groups of living people, and the sweet countenances of children, sitting upon door-steps, working in little wayside gardens, or playing in the middle of the high road at cat, or ball, or marbles. Even on the public promenades one can delight in catching fragments of that familiar chat which is often so suggestive, so frank, so cordial, so far removed from suspicion or the wish to be thought rich, and powerful, and distinguished. Nature, in fact, even unaided by art, will often rebel, for the sake of enjoying interior sunshine, against the cold conventionalism of the world, and suggest a course of study of this kind, however greatly opposed to all its notions. Without our being physiognomists professed, like Eusthenes the philosopher, "who judged men by their

* In Cant. Cantic.

features, being clever at learning even the mind from the eye," people will then sometimes fix on strangers whom fortune may throw in their way, as being the exact embodiment of their best ideal, and perhaps accost them with secret sentiments, at least quite in accordance with the humorous answer,

"Come to my arms, my slight acquaintance."

"Dieu! quelle déesse!" cried a French lady on hearing of an instance; but, in fact, there are times when they will pray as heartily for an unknown person kneeling before them in a church as they could do for their own nearest relatives. Such is, as it were, the cry of blood, the instinct of relationship. Alas! we love those we see only by chance for a moment; but they walk away the next, and perhaps we never see them again, for all our tenderness; at all events, we don't live with them, we are all isolated, meeting each other only after the lapse of long intervals, even if we ever do meet twice. Let us hope that we shall see one another under different circumstances, in the place where there will be no rising from a bench to pass away from our sight for ever thus. Meanwhile, what should be absolutely required is the capacity for appreciating the beauty, the grace, and the goodness that are thus casually presented in the persons of strangers.

"Mille hominum species, et rerum discolor usus.
Velle suum cuique est, nec voto vivitur uno."

Those you pass in the street whom you never saw before, as they are described in the comic song,

"Each dress'd so spruce and gay,
As he is out for a holiday,"

can often cheer a person of right feeling, such as we deem eligible for companion, by their merry voices, their smiling faces, their arch tricks, and their good humour. How would it be if you followed them home? You would often see there realized what extorted that burst of admiration from Seneca, saying, "by no force of words, by no power of genius, could we express what a thing it is, and how laudable and how ineffaceable it ought to be from the memory of men, when any one can say, I have obeyed my parents; I have yielded to them; I have been subject to them whether their government was just or unjust, being

myself in one thing only firm, not to be outdone by benefits *." Yet in our garrets and cellars, and in thousands of our humble tenements, could this be said every day with truth by many a poor man's son, though Arthur seemed to doubt it. Yes, yes; take our neighbours all in all, and what with their looks and accents, and what with their ways of going on, and talking, and amusing themselves,—often silly enough, goodness knows,—and, in short, what with every thing that is drawn out of them by the little casualties of each day, they certainly are loveable. One contracts by means of this habit that kind of fondness for looking at them, and thinking about them, which a painter feels for some works of art that happen to hit his fancy, though it be only something done by himself, and treated by others as so much muck and rubbish. No sooner are they laid by in a corner with backs out, where no one thinks of them, than he must turn them again and have another look; and even when he goes out for a ride or a walk, having to tear himself away, as it were, from these beauties, this poor, distracted lover of perhaps his own work, in one sense, can't for the life of him get them out of his thoughts. Just so is it often with people of this sort of feeling in regard to our Creator's work, as manifested in the chance acquaintances that they left fishing, or rowing, or stitching, or singing, or rattling away at any thing that pleased their fancy at the moment. As the artist stands at a little distance off to view the picture, so those persons seem to have left them on the pier or in the boat, removing from them only to see better the beauty of the living portraits; and then, dwelling on the innocent ways, and often positive goodness too, be it maintained, of these fellow-creatures of theirs, they feel tempted to say with Malcome, "Good God! betimes remove the means that make us strangers, amen." Positively if an invitation were required for being admitted to such a spectacle as that presented in any common street, one can't help thinking how many would prize it, and leave no stone unturned to obtain it. An approximation to this state of things, in a ludicrous way, takes place on occasion of those voyages in boats of excursionists crowded with young and old, gentle and simple, which pass along the Thames,

* De Beneficiis, lib. iii.

or even right away from England, in the dog-days, to the coast of France. Here, as distinguished from the select circle in a private yacht, the chief pleasure consists in seeing people before unknown, and storing one's memory with the images of sweet, smiling, pleasant brothers and sisters of Adam's little family, whom nothing perhaps but such a speculation of some boat proprietor could have brought us into such close contact with. True, among the border classes, that are neither one thing nor the other, you may observe some that seem morose and surly, stupid and rude, more like animals than men, though under a very disagreeable exterior they are often the contrary of what you suppose; but there are others, even of the same ambiguous order, and they constitute the vast majority even of their clan, such as it is, who appear to any healthy eye all sweetness and urbanity, all gentleness and intelligence, all consideration and heroism, all cheerfulness and even grace. It would never do to have for companion one who is insensible to the loveable character of this moral part of the creation, or unwilling to feel attached to such persons in some sort as if they were, in the common acceptation of the word, his own blood relations; or one who did not feel a pleasure to sit down by them, and speak to them, and hear them speak, though it were only to ask the way, or what time it is, or whether such or such a thing had been met on the road. As for the English, we could not be more familiar to each other's ways, though we were all born under the same apple-tree, to use an expression of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. Surely they must have even lived under the same roof with us. How else, pray, should they have come to have exactly the same words for each delicate shade of thought, and the same tone of voice, and the same ways often to express it, without even perhaps articulating a whole word at all? This habit of watching people with a good will towards them may prove conducive to serenity also in a still higher sense, for it may enable us to escape from an injurious despondency about our own accounts with Heaven. For it is but natural—and we might use perhaps more precise terms—to think that these persons whom you observe with such pleasure, are not amongst the reprobate. God must love them, and of that it will require some violence to your notions to entertain a moment's doubt.

Well, now then, look from them to yourself; you are not exactly what you believe them to be. Perhaps it is as well not to inquire much about you; but can you not become mentally and practically like one of these people? It will be so easy, so delightful, even to find yourself invested with the same character as theirs. Then the next step of the syllogism is chalked out for you; and so the habit of charity towards others may enable you to achieve the most important of all purposes concerning your own mind, which consists in not despairing or taking too deep a dislike to yourself. But to return to more ordinary matters and to lighter themes, for which I would bespeak indulgence in the words,

"Teneros ne tange poetas!"

which Jules Janin, after a way of his own, renders by "Touch not these little chinoiseries of thought!" Proceeding, then, to look at a few of these nicknackeries, or whatever you may choose to call them, I invite you to observe that wonderful similarity of unaccountable feeling in the smallest things which simultaneously exists amongst us. Two really intelligent persons will sometimes have the same silly thought at the same moment, without your being able to conceive how such an identity should be. Crossing the Park, for instance, on a day

"When dark November, with his dripping wings,
Shuts out the cheerful face of men and things,"

you dimly perceive looming in the distance some human biped passing on one of the paths that intersect the track before you. At the same instant you both not only anticipate the chance of hitting up against each other, but you resolve out of sheer frolic, for which the time seems so unfit, to do nothing to prevent it. So having simultaneously arrived at this wise determination, you both continue to walk exactly at the same speed as before, with the nicest care neither to accelerate nor slacken it, till arriving at the point of intersection you cross each other so as just to touch with the ends of your fingers, when the giant, who turns out to be a small lad, passing on says with a smile, "All but a collision, I declare!" and off you both steer each on his diverging track, hoisting signals of friendly recognition, and even con-

tinuing to do so till a short distance in the thick atmosphere removes them from your sight.

It belongs to the art of benevolence to mark in small exterior things the indications of industry, of self-respect, of care for others, whether exercised by parents, or masters, or apprentices, and of a million other good qualities that are daily and hourly manifested. Take again the most trifling, the most "Chinese" instances, after the Socratic fashion. Here are then necks fixed into collars of dazzling whiteness; but the weather being hot, off go jackets, and then the secrets of honest poverty in maternal love, trying how to observe appearances, will out in sleeves that do not exactly correspond to the lustre of driven snow. Here are poor children heated with their toil, which they undergo with the most willing obedience and conscious sense of duty, growing redder and redder in the face, till, as the old woman among the thieves in the tale of Cervantes, alluding to pictures that we have all seen somewhere, says, "they look like nothing but so many cherubins." Here is the merry party arriving at water on a sultry day, one of them shouting out, "Come here, all, and make yourselves comfortable while I pump." What puerile observations! some one of course exclaims. Well, after all, they may not please others less for that. Poor Quicksilver in his disgrace wished to be an example to his fellow 'prentices, or, as he calls them, "to the children of Cheapside." Well, some one may now wish to cite different examples that may serve London boys in another way, by showing them that their good qualities are often appreciated.

"Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it," says Lady Macbeth to her husband. The thought was worthy of that high and aspiring dame; but it involved an impossibility. You can find, I repeat it again, the mind's construction in the face, though even Duncan doubts the art. The looks of people as we pass them inspire a pleasant assurance that with the majority, more than you can count on your fingers, if not all within, is right, or in the way of being later set right for ever, let us hope, amen. These common little boys have silky hair that curls naturally, as we say; but while we say so we feel half inclined to suspect that some supernatural artist in the person of an invisible angel-friend has been fingering them into

such shapes worthy the name of love-locks all the morning; and indeed we should not be so far wrong in supposing it, since it was He who is higher than the angels that made them to curl so; and that's not poetry, goodman positive, but a fact. An old writer is struck with the atmosphere of benevolence that is breathed in a promiscuous gathering of people seeking recreation. "If," he says, "there were no other good consequences than that so many persons of different ranks and conditions are seen in their most pleasing aspects, that prospect only would be very far from being below the pleasures of a wise man. There is not one person you can see in whom, if you look with an inclination to be pleased, you may not behold something worthy or agreeable. Our thoughts are in our features; and as this people here are generally such as have a sense of some elegance, and have gentle affections, mankind are seen here to the greatest advantage, which has a good effect upon our spirits." This result is expressed as that of his personal experience by a celebrated author, describing a merry evening in a garden in Gascony, and proceeding thus in a flow of great animal spirits: "Viva la joia, fidon la tristessa! Viva la joia was in their lips, in their eyes. Why could I not live and end my days thus? Just Disposer of our joys and sorrows! cried I, why could not a man sit down on the lap of content here, and dance, and sing, and say his prayers, and go to heaven with these nut-brown lads and lasses*?"

But every where, and at all times, do you not see things that are sufficient to make you fall in love with humanity? The common juveniles, as we before observed, under all circumstances, judging from their faces, seem to be ever enjoying a serene hour. By the way, Lavater's great work is announced in the title-page as the art of loving mankind. Playful and trifling enough, I grant you, may be the disposition at the moment indicated. Again, I would instance puerile, childish things. Here is a boy sharing his sweets—and what an heroic act of self-denial!—by putting them very gravely into his little sister's mouth. Here is another in trouble about his dog, a tan terrier. "You see," he says with a very serious face, "the dog is fond

* Sterne.

of me, and I would not part with him for any thing. But he is subject to fits, and that is very disagreeable to me, besides the pity I feel for him; for he falls down in the street, and foams at the mouth, and knocks his head about on the pavement, and then a crowd gathers round me; but I am going to consult a doctor about him." Here, again, is a contemplatist in the shape of an errand-boy, who, wanting company through many divergent paths, slily makes acquaintance with you by asking the way, acting no doubt on the principle of the stray dog that took to following Alfred de Musset whether the poet would or not, saying to himself in his patois, "Autant celui-là qu'un autre." Behold this miscreant, therefore, as Jules Janin adds, this dandy of the shop and street, wearing a tucked-up apron round his loins, himself spotted with mud from top to toe, with hardly a cap on his head, and showing withal an air of familiarity that it would be hard to equal among animals; behold, I say, this young rascal, so low in the social order, actually walking along with you side by side, while you, perhaps, dreading to fall in with some grand acquaintance, feel somewhat in the condition of a culprit who has to drag his cannon-ball after him, though the heaviness is only in your way of looking at things. Be that as it may, the lesson is soon supplied to you if you choose to study it; for, on coming with you to the first ice of the season on the Serpentine, this poor little comrade, who never suspects that you have been wanting to shirk him, suddenly changes his tone of voice, and says, "How odd it seems, when you think of it, that there should be boys at this moment as merry as you and I who will be drowned before the winter is out; I wish I could be by to save one of them!" I invent nothing, as the merry song has it, "Indeed I'm not romancing;" it is all true history. And why do you wonder? Was not the poet Gray born in Cornhill? Was not Izaak Walton son of a linendraper in Fleet-street? But there is another of a different quirk, who will make you laugh in spite of yourself if you stand still a moment; for he is watching an old raven at the yard gate of a brewery in Oxford-street. He is looking motionless, as grave as the bird, but he is taking his lesson, and it is only to study him. I hope he is as attentive elsewhere. So, after a few minutes, he begins to hop like him, taking at intervals long sideway skips, turning

himself round each time as he hops, till you almost feel inclined to join yourself in the novel kind of galoppe invented by this new dancing-master from the city of the birds, as Aristophanes, perhaps, would qualify the old croaker, and to demand at least of yourself, if not of the bystanders, in the words of the merry song, "Now, isn't he a cure?" Thus may you see in action the kind of boys and girls that were, we might say, photographed by Shakspeare before the sun was taught to be an artist,—pretty and witty, wild, and yet, too, gentle; each with some excellent jest, fire-new from the mint, that can bang you into dumbness. Then, again, is it not natural to think that it must amuse the angels to mark the numberless little domestic incidents, the traits of innocence and goodness, and of youthful simplicity, involving gross ignorance, be it said without offence to the schoolmaster, that daily pass in the houses of the million? The thought of it all ought at least to incline men who are not pedantic more to love each other.

But, above all, of course this art of affection will be greatly promoted by the habit of distinguishing the traits of positive goodness which are presented to every one who watches what is passing daily in our streets and houses. We have been remarking how well people look in general. But, as was suggested before, a person must think well to look well; there can be no rational scepticism on that point. You are reading, suppose in the open air, some page of a book like Household Words, describing a knave, a dirty mean villain or a hypocrite. A light foot approaches; you raise your eyes: it is only a common lad passing, who fulfils the condition required by Apuleius, wearing his whole mind on his forehead. You can hardly help laughing at the kind of angelic contrast presented to the image in your mind's eye by that open loyal countenance. Watch any corner of a street from your window. Though you have no wings to your shoulders, what hinders you from looking at what passes just as you can suppose an angel peeping out of a cloud would look at it? If you renounce the idea, it is the subjective, as your Germans would say, and not the objective, that is wanting; for in the most common, the most indifferent actions, there will be some trace visible of a sense of duty to some absent person or other, some sweet easy acquiescence in a pro-

vidential law, some trait of innocent affection, some instance of fidelity to orders, or of taking an interest in what belongs to another; in short, evidence of a crowd of virtuous and faithful thoughts, if you only accustom yourself to receive it in your own little court. The London apprentice, as painted in old times by Decker, and others, who like his George will all "follow their master" though it were to Bedlam, when he is unjustly sent there, is a character creditable to those times, but which no doubt can still be found among our juvenile population. There is certainly reason to believe in much goodness even among this fry. A casual meeting, the closing or opening of shop-windows, the arranging of articles for sale, without interruption to some sly chat with a comrade, the youth's reply, that might elicit Decker's compliment,

> "Spoke with the spirit of a master,
> Tho' with the tongue of a prentice,"—

any thing that belongs to the relation between man and man, can yield this assurance. Here is a crowd to see the Queen pass to open the Parliament. A compliment is heard articulated by a woman's voice, saying, That tall thief, who has just trod on my toes, keeps me from seeing any thing. The youth that bears his head so much aloft, seeming highly pleased, forces with some difficulty his way back to the rear of all the lines, and every one laughs approvingly. But why did the young man look as if he felt so flattered by the ugly epithet conferred on him? He had not the air of having ever directed his ambition towards successful stealing in his life. Well, that's more than I can undertake to explain. He did feel flattered though. No doubt it was that good humour makes every thing shine, and induces a preference for having the air of one that is pushable and push-backable rather than an aspect to make people fancy that they have "en face un marquis," who, to accommodate his own person, needs room for four, as Molière says. But, perhaps, it is we above all, summer birds skimming over the river, that have most opportunities of judging well of others. Who does not know the sort of kind lads you meet on the Thames at sunrise, who, after a word or two, as if friends of seven years' standing, show you the deep holes where to bathe, and have a

hand to lend you on every occasion, seeming inclined to make an occasion even in order to lend it? Who does not know the quiet good-natured soul that in every family is content to stay at home with the cat on a holiday, in order to let others go out and amuse themselves? Who does not know this type in its noblest form? In that of the venerable grandmother, the strong woman of the Bible, heard of so often at mass, and never heard of without this living representative being remembered?—full of privations for herself, never going out or seeming to have any pleasure but in the wise government of her household, in serving other people, enabling them to be careless, and providing that all things should be in good order without their looking after them; and yet so sure, though it were when she felt herself dying, to approve of other people's going out, and of their amusing themselves, and taking advantage of her previous solicitude; so sure, too, notwithstanding her own deep sense of high moral dignity, to be all allowance for others, all indulgence, aye, and even all tacit forgiveness too, when it was a question of detecting them in a want of that consciousness,—so full of good sense and of consideration for every one, that even, as just observed, in her last sickness, and almost to her last breath, she will be heard expressing regret at the state of things around her, for the sole reason that "it must be so dull" for others. Again, I invent nothing. This is all historical. Yes, truly! your stay-at-homes have their loveable graces, enough, if the facts were known, perhaps to cover the whole confraternity of us of the river and groves with a confusion of face that ought to be very salutary.

But be it so; all this scrutiny of individuals is childish, concerned with gimcracks like the bells on a pagoda. Ascend, then, to things more sensible, as the phrase is; take whole classes of men, and prepare yourself for hearing what is serious and solid. Let me suppose that you once knew Merlin the Paris bookseller, or the Brothers De Bure, of the Rue Serpente. The former, by the way, a living saint and ever merry in the old fashion, was employed over his portfolios in the shop, when in the revolution of July a musket ball struck the pile of books an inch over his head, whereupon he said, "it was time to put up the shutters." To the latter, who were Bourbonists to the

marrow of their bones, I remember having been introduced by M. Chevalier of the Bibliothèque St. Geneviève, himself a staunch Legitimist, who said ironically, on entering their shop, "I bring you one of ours, a young English republican," grinding his teeth after pronouncing the word, "one whom, as in duty bound, you are to make much of." But this is beside the matter. We suppose, then, that you know them, or others of the same type. Assuredly then you will enjoy that charming passage in the late work of M. de Sacy, in which he says, to account for a certain digression, "loving letters and books, it is impossible not to love a little printers and booksellers." In fact, he makes his reader love them, as he describes these representatives of the ancient French booksellers—so loyal, so simple, enjoying with such modesty a fortune nobly acquired by their labour and that of their fathers, loving books for their own sake, as if they had never been made an object of commerce. "How well," he exclaims, "did these brothers represent the citizens of Paris enriched by an honourable trade, transmitting the same profession from father to son in the shop so black and smoked of a great ancestor, and the ancient sign which was a heraldry that was as good as another! What a frank and gracious goodness in their manner of receiving people!—what an air of candour and loyalty even in their countenances! The good old times lived in them wholly. No pretension, no pride; nothing which indicated the humility of gain or the pride of an acquired fortune. They were happy as much as any one can be in this world. There was a fraternity between them and the learned. Their customers were their friends; they were generous, often munificent*."

But after disposing thus of individuals, please to set aside now even classes, and having tried to forget all that you have ever read in newspapers, whether French or English, take whole nations. Assuredly, then, excepting in moments of sinister aberration, when they seem to have lost themselves in losing God and humanity, you will not be straitened for matter to elicit your sentiments of affection for mankind.

One who has lived in France or Spain, in Italy or Germany

* Variétés littéraires, 243.

will be apt to select the race that he has last studied; and often the observation of foreigners is more just and favourable when it is a question of estimating the character of a race than that of fellow-countrymen, or, at least, fellow-subjects. Strangers best discern, too, what is the predominant disposition, as when Philippe de Commines said, speaking for all the French of that age, "les Anglois sont fort honorables*." One sees for example a whole people represented in that charming portrait by the Duc de Saint-Simon of Hyghens, doubtless Higgans, the Irish physician at the court of Philip the Fifth. "Open but discreet, gentle yet firm, a noble mind without the least affectation, always intent on good without any selfishness—loving his family and relations, but never taking by-ways to serve them; speaking the truth boldly to the king and to the queen when they asked his opinion, but not obtruding it; just and agreeable, of great talents and deep observation. Devout, with a true enlightened piety which was only for himself, and which never inconvenienced others, excepting by its not allowing him to talk uncharitably when they wanted him to do so; pleasant in conversation, instructive, loving his country and his fellow-countrymen with tenderness; having a lively attachment for his king; and when in private with his friends allowing this fire of the land of his birth to flame up in a marvellous way; kind to all the world, but without means of rest when he could render service to one as loyal as himself. Such candour, such probity, and such assiduous attentions," adds this noble observer, "won my affection, and we became the greatest friends†." In these lines, I repeat it, one must recognize the characteristics of a whole race,—witnessed even in the feeling of displeasure with which exceptionable cases are regarded by the same people. Let us, however, take another instance more familiar to us at the present moment, and hear how the English are described in a manuscript of the seventeenth century which is in the royal library at Brussels‡. Here is no extravagant or faultless portrait, but it is a natural likeness, and notwithstanding the defects that are acknowledged, not to say because of them, I think

* iii. 6. † Mém. tom. xix. 16.

‡ The Rambler, March, 1858.

you will feel disposed to admit that such a people in their collective capacity, irrespective of their modern institutions, forgetting their "press," and let the coldness and pride of a few be ever so great, are very loveable.

After observing that generally the Italians are cautious and civil, the Spaniards haughty and grave, the French prompt and light, the Dutch jealous and slow, this curious observer adds, "that the English are generally of no one nature, or humour, or custom, and consequently not to be comprised within one rule; but they walk by several ways, as if they all were almost of several nations. For you shall find thousands of them who love the sober, and as many who love the giddy way. Some love the gravity and state of the Spaniard; some the reservedness and cleanliness of the Italian; some the levity and alacrity of the French; and some the slowness and jealousy of the Dutch; and many, in a word, are prodigal, many miserable, many confident, many jealous; as if they were not only no sons of the same mother, but not so much as men of the same nation. The English nation abounds much with a kind of great ingenuous simplicity and goodness of nature; and it makes itself appear very easily in them from the mind into the body. I take it they possess natural virtue, or rather inclination of nature, in a very high degree; for which they well deserve both love and praise. For of all nations in this world, I think really they are the fullest of compassion. They are exclusive, however," he adds, "in their admiration. If some Englishman will follow the court, he thinks presently he were to be damned if even he should spend a month in the country. And if another should have set up a pack of dogs, or come once to keep a cast or two of hawks in the country, or else, if he be wont to meet weekly with his neighbours at some bowling-green near his next market-town,—he presently falls to pity the great men at court, instead of envying them; and he would not for the whole world even become a bedchamber-man to the king. With respect to their inconstancy, I think that it is not final in respect of any object. I mean, they do not usually pitch and fix irremovably upon a change; but if they go, they come again, and so have many turns and returns: wherein, indeed, they do but show themselves to be men a little more than perhaps some others

do. For man is created in this life to consist, as St. Austin saith, of disagreements and reconciliations, that is, of varieties and vicissitudes, by the continual use of free-will, according to his own pleasure or humour; whereas the angels were all created with an intention in Almighty God to establish and fasten them for ever according to that election which they would make by that one first single act which their free-will should produce. But since men are made changeable by their very nature of being men, I hold it for a vain and false and foolish affectation of pride for any one to affirm that naturally he delights not in any change of some kind or other. For such persons would fain make us think that they are rather angels than men: whereas, indeed, herein they are not so much men as they are beasts; for they know not the first ground of their own creation." "My Lord of Bristol," he then adds, alluding to the ancestor of one of our crew, whose words are the more noticeable as coming from a convert to the ancient faith, "was thus saying once to me, and it was in Flanders, 'You and I have spent many years in seeing many parts of the world, but yet there is one fruit that grows in your country and mine with which we never met any where else.' I asked him what that might be, and he bade me guess. I thought he had meant of some real fruit; and so I fell to speak first to him of damsons, and wardens, and afterwards of pearmains; for I had never seen any of these abroad. 'I will take you off from the rack,' said my lord, 'for it is none of these, nor any thing like them; but it is a certain fruit called good-nature, which grows nowhere but in England, or at least I never met with it but there.' I said so too, and I say so still. Others have great virtues, as well as we; but we have good-nature much more than they. And the professing of this truth shall be the end of this chapter."

But we are exceeding all limits, and perhaps, too, some of us want to save the tide. We cannot stop here very much longer.

Let then these aspirants to the sort of enjoyment we are concerned with only acquire the habit of thus observing things broadly, artistically in some sort,—though after all that is only what the common people, and especially women, are doing every day before our eyes; let them only get into the habit also of

reflecting from an eminence, as it were, on the character of individuals, of classes, and of nations; and they will probably come in time to be great proficients in the sweetest of all serene accomplishments, that of benevolence. To have made some progress in studies of this kind will at all events be necessary, if any one would really partake, with such people as we are supposing going out for the day, of a few bright happy hours. They must thus be willing to judge from generals and not from particulars, which habit will lead to their believing the best of every one, and to their supposing that strangers, however unknown to themselves, are probably something very like just what they ought to be. When hearing of the fate of any victims of misfortune, their first impression will not then be like that of too many at present, who seem on such occasions to suppose that these must have been wicked, heedless wretches, marked for punishment; but their exclamations will resemble those of Miranda, compassionating the shipwrecked strangers:

> "——— a brave vessel,
> Who had no doubt some noble creatures in her,
> Dash'd all to pieces!"

Such a watcher and observer of mankind will reap as the reward of his art a serenity which is above all enjoyment, and can say with Cowley,

> "Thus with unwearied wings I flee
> Through all love's gardens and his fields;
> And like the wise, industrious bee,
> No weed but honey to me yields."

It still remains, however late it may be, to observe the direct tendency of such an acquirement to produce the result we have in view all through these excursions, and the high sanction with which the least, and what you would call perhaps the most childish of its characteristics, are recommended to us all.

"The pleasures of humanity," says an old writer, "are next to those of devotion. In both satisfactions there is a certain humiliation which exalts the soul above its ordinary state, lessening our value of ourselves, and enlarging our estimation of others." The truth is, the qualification that has been insisted

on during this day's ramble, all puerile and romantic as it may seem, was nothing less than what in Christian language is called charity, which not only hopes, but believes all things; and, as Richard of St. Victor says, "nihil charitate dulcius, nihil charitate jucundius; charitatis deliciis rationalis vita nihil dulcius experitur*." Perhaps at moments we distrust our own estimate of these minor and essentially human affections; but they belong to what is the greatest and strongest of all things in the universe—charity.

> "Close, narrow chain, yet soft and kind,
> As that which sp'rits above to good does bind,
> Gentle and sweet necessity,
> Which does not force but guide our liberty."

But let us go back to Richard, and again hear him speaking in his mystic way. "The Persons of the blessed Trinity," he says, "must be equally happy, and therefore they must furnish the highest examples of this incomparable state of love. You grant they must be happy. Now without charity there cannot be happiness; for as nothing is better, so nothing is sweeter than charity, and nature itself teaches this as well as experience. Therefore in the plenitude of happiness charity cannot be wanting, which, of course, wherever it exists, must involve plurality of persons, mutual love—those who love and those who are loved†." In these few words, though referring to matters infinite and ineffable, is contained proof to convince us how needful must be this qualification within human limits, to obtain the serenity of which we are in search—the sweetness of a serene hour. And well does the great teacher observe, that common experience proves its efficacy; for really when you come to love men so, every thing looks different from what it did when you were indifferent to them after the fashion of the world; every thing wears a sort of youthful smile—the gardens, the streets, the houses, the house-tops. While speculating as you walk on the character and pursuits of the people who inhabit them, you are made happy by every object that seems intended to minister to the pleasure of others, though it were only some flowers on a

* De Trin. iii. c. 4. † Lib. iii. c. 2, 3.

window-stool, or a little cat's terrace opening from a garret. What an inquisitive charm over all! How your fancy runs riot, peopling the chambers! If at dawn, before any one else seems up, hearing the last cheerful "Good night!" imagining you see the mother, and the child, and the sons adolescent, and the sisters that love them so, all retiring for the night, which for them still lasts. How you sympathize in their rest, in the joys of their awakening, in their projects for the ensuing day, and in all that concerns them! The impression of the moment is felt as a sort of momentary foretaste of heaven; which is not wonderful, since, as we have now in conclusion to observe, it is this disposition also which, constituting goodness, prepares man for being able to taste the peace that is to last, not for a day or half a day, but for ever.

"Goodness, the special attribute of the Holy Ghost, is to wish well," says Richard of St. Victor; "for what else is it but a good will? and it includes a certain portion of wisdom and power; for to be able to wish well is to have some power, and it is the part of wisdom to discern between good and evil, without which discretion the will knows not what to choose. A good will makes the soul beautiful, benignity makes it beautiful, whereas malignity renders it hideous*." "Some," he says elsewhere, "think nothing criminal but what injures others. You might almost grant the proposition, which seems identical with the text of St. Paul, that sin is sin as far as it is contrary to the love of one another. For not to speak of the spoiling of one's own soul, of which the highest state is love, how few sins can we commit that do not, even in a material sense, injure, as if with malice, some one or other†!" An ancient philosopher even says that no one person can err without involving some other person in his error. Honour then, the love of truth, and affectionate thoughts are therefore among the noblest motives of life, because they rest on this qualification, which is not only found indispensable for our purpose, but even in precincts far from our haunts at present, to confer the highest claim, as Foscari intimates in his reply to Valentio when he learns that the latter has become a Benedictine, and says to him, omitting

* De Trinitate, vi. 22. † De Potestate ligandi, 23.

all allusions to other graces, "Your charity make you still worthy of that reverend habit!" "In short," concludes Richard, as if turning to address your steady-going people, who rather slight such dispositions as poetical, "whatever you do will be displeasing without charity; however you pound, or bruise, or mash it, there will be no fragrance rising from it to God*. Charity, alone," he continues, "has no enemies. It does not repay injuries, for it is benign; it is not hurt by the happiness of another, for it envieth not; it is not self-accused, for it acteth not perversely; it is not moved by honours, for it is not puffed up; it does not strive for eminence, not being ambitious; it is not narrowed by cupidity, for it seeketh not its own; it is not to be provoked, for it is not irritable; it is not suspicious, for it thinketh no evil; others' faults yield it no pleasure, for it rejoiceth not in iniquity. Errors do not blind it, for it rejoiceth in the truth. Persecutions bend it not, for it beareth all things. Despair does not absorb it, for it hopeth all things. Intolerance does not affect it, for it endureth all things. Without charity nothing avails; with it not the least work is rejected, without it not the greatest acceptable; not preaching, though with the tongues of angels; not faith, though it remove mountains; not alms, though all that you have in the world be given away; not mortification of the body, though it be delivered to be burnt; not masses, for till you are reconciled to your brother your gift cannot be offered at the altar. God is a lover of men, and all he asks from man is love. Charity sees every thing to be not only admirable, but amiable. Pure are its eyes, which in transitory contemplate eternal things†."

But lo! the stream will soon be refluent. Take to your oars, comrades. If these expeditions produced nothing else but an occasion to hear read such extracts as the last, methinks the hours spent on them would be as profitable as they are serene.

"O precious evenings! all too swiftly sped,
Leaving us heirs to amplest heritages
Of all the thoughts of the greatest sages,
And giving tongues unto the silent dead!"

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* In Cant. Cantic. † Tract. de Gradibus Charitatis.

In fact, it is hard to speak of them without appearing to indulge in hyperboles, and even in something worse. Stahl describes the gate of Paradise as having over it this inscription, "Here they love." It would look like being atrociously sentimental if one were to breathe a suggestion, though resolving rather to die than utter it, that our boat this day, our garden, or our bower might have been described in the same words. We know better, I hope, than to play the romantic fool like that. But then there would be no use in pretending that an angel in the sky, if he thought it worth while to take notice of them, and had a fit of the writing mania on him, could truly inscribe over their image presented to him, "Here they hate," though that would seem more manly and muscular to some. It would not be true if he did so, for all his deathless pen. No, the fact is, that when people's thoughts are directed this way, and their hearts moved in accordance, there comes over the grove or the river a certain influence which one may call magical, from not knowing exactly what it is. It is then as if our Thames partook of the character of those enchanted waters we read about in the adventures of Angelica, which, when they were a running stream, caused every body who tasted them to fall in love; when Rinaldo so unfortunately preferred the stagnant pool which caused him to fall out of love, or, rather, to feel his love turn into hate,—just, I think, as if he had drunk from one of those "crystal fountains" introduced into a grand ostentatious supper-room in the capital, for an invitation to which so many would contract a league with the enemy of man, and swear to hate any number of people you liked with the malice of the fiend. Boiardo calls it the "fountain of disdain;" and perhaps, in London, the analogous one, for all its grandeur, or exclusive pretensions to denote society, deserves no other title. We, meanwhile, thrown on the common river and the running stream, seemed transported into a world where affection and good will held undisputed sway; it was as if we were listening to echoes from what was uttered by a race of happy mortals under a purer sky and fresher shades:

> "Devenere locos lætos et amœna vireta
> Fortunatorum nemorum sedesque beatas."

Matter of fact this, for all its poetry. Yes, if we searched deep into it, just so, only so many positive facts.

"But hear me now what I have to say, leaders and counsellors," as Alcinous cries out, "and what my mind calls on me to proclaim." Having thus recreated yourselves going home, lie down each of you till morning, and then you may turn to other matters.

So on they went homewards; and, as our poet says,

> "Thus sung they in the English boat,
> A holy and a cheerful note:
> While all the way, to guide their chime,
> With falling oars they kept the time."

END OF VOL I.

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